

Illustrated Sterling Edition

RIENZI

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE

THE COMING RACE

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTON



BOSTON

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TO
ALESSANDRO MANZONI,

AS TO THE GENIUS OF THE PLACE,
ARE DEDICATED THESE FRUITS GATHERED
ON THE SOIL OF ITALIAN FICTION.

LONDON, December 1, 1885.

DEDICATION,

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST COLLECTED EDITION OF THE
AUTHOR'S WORKS IN 1840.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — In inscribing with your beloved and honored name this Collection of my Works, I could wish that the fruits of my manhood were worthier of the tender and anxious pains bestowed upon my education in youth.

Left yet young, and with no ordinary accomplishments and gifts, the sole guardian of your sons, to them you devoted the best years of your useful and spotless life; and any success it be their fate to attain in the paths they have severally chosen, would have its principal sweetness in the thought that such success was the reward of one whose hand aided every struggle, and whose heart sympathized in every care.

From your graceful and accomplished taste, I early learned that affection for literature which has exercised so large an influence over the pursuits of my life; and you who were my first guide were my earliest critic. Do you remember the summer days, which seemed to me so short, when you repeated to me those old ballads with which Percy revived the decaying spirit of our national muse, or the smooth couplets of Pope, or those gentle and polished verses with the composition of which you had beguiled your own earlier leisure? It was those easy lessons, far more than the harsher rudiments learned subsequently in schools, that taught me to admire and to imitate; and in them I recognize the germ of the flowers, however perishable they be, that I now bind up and lay upon a shrine hallowed by a thousand memories of unspeakable affection. Happy, while I borrowed from your taste, could I have found it not more difficult to imitate your virtues, — your spirit of active and extended benevolence, your cheerful piety, your considerate justice, your kindly charity, and all the qualities that brighten a nature more free from the thought of self than any it has been my lot to meet with. Never more than at this moment did I wish that my writings were possessed of a merit which might outlive my time, so that at least these lines might remain a record of the excellence of the Mother and the gratitude of the Son.

E. L. B.

LONDON, January 6, 1840.



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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION OF RIENZI.

I BEGAN this tale two years ago at Rome. On removing to Naples I threw it aside for "The Last Days of Pompeii," which required more than "Rienzi" the advantage of residence within reach of the scenes described. The fate of the Roman Tribune continued, however, to haunt and impress me, and some time after "Pompeii" was published, I renewed my earlier undertaking. I regarded the completion of these volumes, indeed, as a kind of duty; for having had occasion to read the original authorities from which modern historians have drawn their accounts of the life of Rienzi, I was led to believe that a very remarkable man had been superficially judged, and a very important period crudely examined.¹ And this belief was sufficiently strong to induce me at first to meditate a more serious work upon the life and times of Rienzi.² Various reasons concurred against this project, and I renounced the biography to commence the fiction. I have still, however, adhered, with a greater fidelity than is customary in Romance, to all the leading events of the public life of the Roman Tribune; and the reader will perhaps find in these pages a more full and detailed account of the rise and fall of Rienzi than in

¹ See Appendix, Nos. I. and II.

² I have adopted the termination of *Rienzi* instead of *Rienzo*, as being more familiar to the general reader. But the latter is perhaps the more accurate reading, since the name was a popular corruption from Lorenzo.

any English work of which I am aware. I have, it is true, taken a view of his character different in some respects from that of Gibbon or Sismondi. But it is a view, in all its main features, which I believe (and think I could prove) myself to be warranted in taking, not less by the facts of History than the laws of Fiction. In the mean while, as I have given the facts from which I have drawn my interpretation of the principal agent, the reader has sufficient data for his own judgment. In the picture of the Roman Populace, as in that of the Roman Nobles of the fourteenth century, I follow literally the descriptions left to us; they are not flattering, but they are faithful, likenesses.

Preserving generally the real chronology of Rienzi's life, the plot of this work extends over a space of some years, and embraces the variety of characters necessary to a true delineation of events. The story, therefore, cannot have precisely that order of interest found in fictions strictly and genuinely *dramatic*, in which (to my judgment at least) the time ought to be as limited as possible, and the characters as few; no new character of importance to the catastrophe being admissible towards the end of the work. If I may use the word "Epic" in its most modest and unassuming acceptation, this Fiction, in short, though indulging in dramatic situation, belongs, as a whole, rather to the Epic than the Dramatic school.

I cannot conclude without rendering the tribute of my praise and homage to the versatile and gifted Author of the beautiful Tragedy of Rienzi. Considering that our hero be the same; considering that we had the same materials from which to choose our several stories,—I trust I shall be found to have little, if at all, trespassed upon ground previously occupied. With the single exception of a love-intrigue between a relative of Rienzi and one of the antagonist party, which makes the plot of Miss Mitford's Tragedy, and is little more than an episode in my

Romance, having slight effect on the conduct and none on the fate of the hero, I am not aware of any resemblance between the two works; and even *this* coincidence I could easily have removed, had I deemed it the least advisable: but it would be almost discreditable if I had *nothing* that resembled a performance possessing so much it were an honor to imitate.

In fact, the prodigal materials of the story, the rich and exuberant complexities of Rienzi's character, joined to the advantage possessed by the Novelist of embracing all that the Dramatist must reject,¹ are sufficient to prevent Dramatist and Novelist from interfering with each other.

LONDON, December 1, 1835.

¹ Thus the slender space permitted to the Dramatist does not *allow* Miss Mitford to be very faithful to facts,—to distinguish between Rienzi's earlier and his later period of power, or to detail the true but somewhat intricate causes of his rise, his splendor, and his fall.

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1848.

FROM the time of its first appearance, "RIENZI" has had the good fortune to rank high amongst my most popular works, though its interest is rather drawn from a faithful narration of historical facts than from the inventions of fancy. And the success of this experiment confirms me in my belief that the true mode of employing history in the service of romance is to study diligently the materials *as* history, conform to such views of the facts as the Author would adopt if he related them in the dry character of historian, and obtain that warmer interest which fiction bestows, by tracing the causes of the facts in the characters and emotions of the personages of the time. The events of his work are thus already shaped to his hand, the characters already created; what remains for him is the inner, not outer, history of man, — the chronicle of the human heart; and it is by this that he introduces a new harmony between character and event, and adds the completer solution of what is actual and true, by those speculations of what is natural and probable, which are out of the province of history, but belong especially to the philosophy of romance. And if it be permitted the tale-teller to come reverently for instruction in his art to the mightiest teacher of all, who, whether in the page or on the scene, would give to airy fancies the breath and the form of life, such, we may observe, is the lesson the humblest craftsman in historical

romance may glean from the Historical Plays of Shakspeare. Necessarily, Shakspeare consulted history according to the imperfect lights and from the popular authorities of his age, and I do not say, therefore, that as an historian we can rely upon Shakspeare as correct. But to that in which he believed he rigidly adhered; nor did he seek, as lesser artists (such as Victor Hugo and his disciples) seek now, to turn perforce the Historical into the Poetical, but leaving history as he found it, to call forth from its arid prose the flower of the latent poem. Nay, even in the more imaginative plays which he has founded upon novels and legends popular in his time, it is curious and instructive to see how little he has altered the original ground-work, — taking for granted the main materials of the story, and reserving all his matchless resources of wisdom and invention to illustrate from mental analysis the creations whose outline he was content to borrow. He receives, as a literal fact not to be altered, the somewhat incredible assertion of the novelist that the pure and delicate and high-born Venetian loves the swarthy Moor, and that Romeo, fresh from his “woes for Rosaline,” becomes suddenly enamoured of Juliet: he found the Improbable, and employed his art to make it truthful.

That “RIENZI” should have attracted peculiar attention in Italy is of course to be attributed to the choice of the subject rather than to the skill of the Author. It has been translated into the Italian language by eminent writers; and the authorities for the new view of Rienzi’s times and character which the Author deemed himself warranted to take, have been compared with his text by careful critics and illustrious scholars in those States in which the work has been permitted to circulate.¹ I may say, I trust without unworthy pride, that the result has confirmed the

¹ In the Papal States, I believe, it was, neither prudently nor effectually, proscribed.

accuracy of delineations which English readers, relying only on the brilliant but disparaging account in Gibbon, deemed too favorable, and has tended to restore the great Tribune to his long-forgotten claims to the love and reverence of the Italian land. Nor, if I may trust to the assurances that have reached me from many now engaged in the aim of political regeneration, has the effect of that revival of the honors due to a national hero, leading to the ennobling study of great examples, been wholly without its influence upon the rising generation of Italian youth, and thereby upon those stirring events which have recently drawn the eyes of Europe to the men and the lands beyond the Alps.

In preparing for the Press this edition of a work illustrative of the exertions of a Roman, in advance of his time, for the political freedom of his country, and of those struggles between contending principles of which Italy was the most stirring field in the Middle Ages, it is not out of place or season to add a few sober words, whether as a student of the Italian past or as an observer with some experience of the social elements of Italy as it now exists, upon the state of affairs in that country.

It is nothing new to see the Papal Church in the capacity of a popular reformer, and in contra-position to the despotic potentates of the several States, as well as to the German Emperor, who nominally inherits the sceptre of the Cæsars. Such was its common character under its more illustrious Pontiffs; and the old Republics of Italy grew up under the shadow of the Papal throne, harboring ever two factions,—the one for the Emperor, the other for the Pope; the latter the more naturally allied to Italian independence. On the modern stage, we almost see the repetition of many an ancient drama. But the past should teach us to doubt the continuous and steadfast progress of any single line of policy under a principality so constituted

as that of the Papal Church, — a principality in which no race can be perpetuated, in which no objects can be permanent, in which the successor is chosen by a select ecclesiastical synod, under a variety of foreign as well as of national influences, in which the chief usually ascends the throne at an age that ill adapts his mind to the idea of human progress and the active direction of mundane affairs; a principality in which the peculiar sanctity that wraps the person of the Sovereign exonerates him from the healthful liabilities of a power purely temporal, and directly accountable to Man. A reforming Pope is a lucky accident; and dull indeed must be the brain which believes in the possibility of a long succession of reforming Popes, or which can regard as other than precarious and unstable the discordant combination of a constitutional government with an infallible head.

It is as true as it is trite that political freedom is not the growth of a day; it is not a flower without a stalk, and it must gradually develop itself amidst the unfolding leaves of kindred institutions.

In one respect the Austrian domination, fairly considered, has been beneficial to the States over which it has been directly exercised, and may be even said to have unconsciously schooled them to the capacity for freedom. In those States the personal rights which depend on impartial and incorrupt administration of the law are infinitely more secure than in most of the Courts of Italy. Bribery, which shamefully predominates in the judicature of certain Principalities, is as unknown in the juridical courts of Austrian Italy as in England. The Emperor himself is often involved in legal disputes with a subject, and justice is as free and as firm for the humblest suitor as if his antagonist were his equal. Austria indeed but holds together the motley and inharmonious members of its vast domain on either side the Alps by a general

character of paternal mildness and forbearance in all that great circle of good government which lies without the one principle of constitutional liberty. It asks but of its subjects to submit to be well governed, without agitating the question "how and by what means that government is carried on." For every man except the politician, the innovator, Austria is no harsh stepmother. But it is obviously clear that the better in other respects the administration of a state, it does but foster the more the desire for that political security which is only found in constitutional freedom; the reverence paid to personal rights but begets the passion for political; and under a mild despotism are already half matured the germs of a popular constitution. But it is still a grave question whether Italy is ripe for self-government, and whether, were it possible that the Austrian domination could be shaken off, the very passions so excited, the very bloodshed so poured forth, would not ultimately place the larger portion of Italy under auspices less favorable to the sure growth of freedom than those which silently brighten under the sway of the German Cæsar.

The two kingdoms, at the opposite extremes of Italy, to which circumstance and nature seem to assign the main ascendancy, are Naples and Sardinia. Looking to the former, it is impossible to discover on the face of the earth a country more adapted for commercial prosperity. Nature formed it as the garden of Europe and the mart of the Mediterranean. Its soil and climate could unite the products of the East with those of the Western hemisphere. The rich island of Sicily should be the great corn granary of the modern nations as it was of the ancient; the figs, the olives, the oranges of both the Sicilies, under skilful cultivation, should equal the produce of Spain and the Orient; and the harbors of the kingdom (the keys to three quarters of the globe) should be crowded with the sails and

busy with the life of commerce. But in the character of its population Naples has been invariably in the rear of Italian progress; it caught but partial inspiration from the free Republics, or even the wise Tyrannies, of the Middle Ages; the theatre of frequent revolutions without fruit; and all rational enthusiasm created by that insurrection which has lately bestowed on Naples the boon of a representative system, cannot but be tempered by the conviction that of all the States in Italy, this is the one which least warrants the belief of permanence to political freedom, or of capacity to retain with vigor what may be seized by passion.¹

Far otherwise is it with Sardinia. Many years since, the writer of these pages ventured to predict that the time must come when Sardinia would lead the van of Italian civilization, and take proud place amongst the greater nations of Europe. In the great portion of this population there is visible the new blood of a young race. It is not, as with other Italian States, a worn-out stock; you do not see there a people fallen, proud of the past, and lazy amidst ruins, but a people rising, practical, industrious, active, — there, in a word, is an eager youth to be formed to mature

¹ If the Electoral Chamber in the new Neapolitan Constitution give a fair share of members to the island of Sicily, it will be rich in the inevitable elements of discord, and nothing save a wisdom and moderation which cannot soberly be anticipated, can prevent the ultimate separation of the island from the dominion of Naples. Nature has set the ocean between the two countries; but differences in character, and degree and quality of civilization, national jealousies, historical memories, have trebled the space of the seas that roll between them. More easy to unite under one free Parliament Spain with Flanders, or re-annex to England its old domains of Aquitaine and Normandy, than to unite in one Council Chamber, *truly* popular, the passions, interests, and prejudices of Sicily and Naples. Time will show. And now, in May, 1849, Time has already shown the impracticability of the first scheme proposed for cordial union between Naples and Sicily, and has rendered it utterly impossible, by mutual recollections of hatred, bequeathed by a civil war of singular barbarism, that Naples should permanently retain Sicily by any other hold than the brute force of conquest.

development, not a decrepit age to be restored to bloom and muscle. Progress is the great characteristic of the Sardinian state. Leave it for five years, visit it again, and you behold improvement. When you enter the kingdom and find, by the very skirts of its admirable roads, a raised footpath for the passengers and travellers from town to town, you become suddenly aware that you are in a land where close attention to the humbler classes is within the duties of a government. As you pass on from the more purely Italian part of the population,—from the Genoese country into that of Piedmont,—the difference between a new people and an old, on which I have dwelt, becomes visible in the improved cultivation of the soil, the better habitations of the laborer, the neater aspect of the towns, the greater activity in the thoroughfares. To the extraordinary virtues of the King, as King, justice is scarcely done, whether in England or abroad. Certainly, despite his recent concessions, Charles Albert is not and cannot be at heart much of a constitutional reformer; and his strong religious tendencies, which, perhaps unjustly, have procured him in philosophical quarters the character of a bigot, may link him, more than his political, with the cause of the Father of his Church. But he is nobly and pre-eminently national, careful of the prosperity and jealous of the honor of his own state, while conscientiously desirous of the independence of Italy. His attention to business is indefatigable. Nothing escapes his vigilance. Over all departments of the kingdom is the eye of a man ever anxious to improve. Already the silk manufactures of Sardinia almost rival those of Lyons; in their own departments the tradesman of Turin exhibit an artistic elegance and elaborate finish scarcely exceeded in the wares of London and Paris. The King's internal regulations are admirable, his laws administered with the most impartial justice; his forts and defences are in that order without

which, at least on the Continent, no land is safe ; his army is the most perfect in Italy. His wise genius extends itself to the elegant as to the useful arts ; an encouragement that shames England, and even France, is bestowed upon the School for Painters, which has become one of the ornaments of his illustrious reign. The character of the main part of the population, and the geographical position of his country, assist the monarch, and must force on himself or his successors in the career of improvement so signally begun. In the character of the people, the vigor of the Northman ennobles the ardor and fancy of the West. In the position of the country, the public mind is brought into constant communication with the new ideas in the free lands of Europe. Civilization sets in direct currents towards the streets and marts of Turin. Whatever the result of the present crisis in Italy, no power and no chance which statesmen can predict can preclude Sardinia from ultimately heading all that is best in Italy. The King may improve his present position ; or peculiar prejudices, inseparable perhaps from the heritage of absolute monarchy, and which the raw and rude councils of an Electoral Chamber, newly called into life, must often irritate and alarm, may check his own progress towards the master throne of the Ausonian land. But the people themselves, sooner or later, will do the work of the King. And in now looking round Italy for a race worthy of Rienzi, and able to accomplish his proud dreams, I see but one for which the time is ripe or ripening, and I place the hopes of Italy in the men of Piedmont and Sardinia.

LONDON, February 14, 1848.

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RIENZI:

THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BOOK I.

THE TIME, THE PLACE, AND THE MEN.

Fu da sua gioventudine nutricato di latte di eloquenza, buono grammatico, migliore rettorico, autorista buono. . . . Oh, come spesso diceva, "Dove sono questi buoni Romani? Dov'è loro somma giustizia? Poterommi trovare in tempo che questi fioriscano?" Era bell'omo. . . . Accadde che uno suo frate fu ucciso e non ne fu fatta vendetta di sua morte; non lo poteò aiutare; pensa lungo mano vendicare 'l sangue di suo frate; pensa lunga mano dirizzare la cittate di Roma male guidata. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi* (ed. 1828). Forlì.

From his youth he was nourished with the milk of eloquence; a good grammarian, a better rhetorician, well versed in the writings of authors. . . . Oh, how often would he say, "Where are those good Romans? Where is their supreme justice? Shall I ever behold such times as those in which they flourished?" He was a handsome man. . . . It happened that a brother of his was slain, and no retribution was made for his death: he could not help him; long did he ponder how to avenge his brother's blood; long did he ponder how to direct the misguided state of Rome. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS.

THE celebrated name which forms the title to this work will sufficiently apprise the reader that it is in the earlier half of the fourteenth century that my story opens.

It was on a summer evening that two youths might be seen walking beside the banks of the Tiber, not far from that part of its winding course which sweeps by the base of Mount Aventine. The path they had selected was remote and tranquil.

It was only at a distance that were seen the scattered and squalid houses that bordered the river, from amidst which rose, dark and frequent, the high roof and enormous towers which marked the fortified mansion of some Roman baron. On one side of the river, behind the cottages of the fishermen, soared Mount Janiculum, dark with massive foliage, from which gleamed at frequent intervals the gray walls of many a castellated palace, and the spires and columns of a hundred churches; on the other side, the deserted Aventine rose abrupt and steep, covered with thick brushwood; while on the height, from concealed but numerous convents, rolled, not unmusically, along the quiet landscape and the rippling waves, the sound of the holy bell.

Of the young men introduced in this scene, the elder, who might have somewhat passed his twentieth year, was of a tall and even commanding stature; and there was that in his presence remarkable and almost noble, despite the homeliness of his garb, which consisted of the long, loose gown and the plain tunic, both of dark-gray serge, which distinguished, at that time, the dress of the humbler scholars who frequented the monasteries for such rude knowledge as then yielded a scanty return for intense toil. His countenance was handsome, and would have been rather gay than thoughtful in its expression, but for that vague and abstracted dreaminess of eye which so usually denotes a propensity to revery and contemplation, and betrays that the past or the future is more congenial to the mind than the enjoyment and action of the present hour.

The younger, who was yet a boy, had nothing striking in his appearance or countenance, unless an expression of great sweetness and gentleness could be so called; and there was something almost feminine in the tender deference with which he appeared to listen to his companion. His dress was that usually worn by the humbler classes, though somewhat neater, perhaps, and newer; and the fond vanity of a mother might be detected in the care with which the long and silky ringlets had been smoothed and parted as they escaped from his cap and flowed midway down his shoulders.

As they thus sauntered on beside the whispering reeds of the river, each with his arm round the form of his comrade, there was a grace in the bearing, in the youth, and in the evident affection of the brothers — for such their connection — which elevated the lowliness of their apparent condition.

"Dear brother," said the elder, "I cannot express to thee how I enjoy these evening hours. To you alone I feel as if I were not a mere visionary and idler when I talk of the uncertain future, and build up my palaces of the air. Our parents listen to me as if I were uttering fine things out of a book; and my dear mother — Heaven bless her! — wipes her eyes and says, 'Hark, what a scholar he is!' As for the monks, if I ever dare look from my Livy and cry, 'Thus should Rome be again!' they stare and gape and frown, as though I had broached an heresy. But you, sweet brother, though you share not my studies, sympathize so kindly with all their results — you seem so to approve my wild schemes, and to encourage my ambitious hopes — that sometimes I forget our birth, our fortunes, and think and dare as if no blood save that of the Teuton Emperor flowed through our veins."

"Methinks, dear Cola," said the younger brother, "that Nature played us an unfair trick: to you she transmitted the royal soul, derived from our father's parentage; and to me only the quiet and lowly spirit of my mother's humble lineage."

"Nay," answered Cola, quickly, "you would then have the brighter share; for I should have but the Barbarian origin, and you the Roman. Time was when to be a simple Roman was to be nobler than a northern king. Well, well, we may live to see great changes!"

"I shall live to see thee a great man, and that will content me," said the younger, smiling affectionately. "A great scholar all confess you to be already; our mother predicts your fortunes every time she hears of your welcome visits to the Colonna."

"The Colonna!" said Cola, with a bitter smile; "the Colonna, — the pedants! They affect, dull souls, the knowledge of the past, play the patron, and misquote Latin over their cups! They are pleased to welcome me at their board be-

cause the Roman doctors call me learned, and because Nature gave me a wild wit, which to them is pleasanter than the stale jests of a hired buffoon. Yes, they would advance my fortunes: but how? By some place in the public offices, which would fill a dishonored coffer; by wringing, yet more sternly, the hard-earned coins from our famishing citizens! If there be a vile thing in the world, it is a plebeian advanced by patricians, not for the purpose of righting his own order, but for playing the pander to the worst interests of theirs. He who is of the people but makes himself a traitor to his birth if he furnishes the excuse for these tyrant hypocrites to lift up their hands and cry: 'See what liberty exists in Rome when *we*, the patricians, thus elevate a plebeian!' Did they ever elevate a plebeian if he sympathized with plebeians? No, brother; should I be lifted above our condition, I will be raised by the arms of my countrymen, and not upon their necks."

"All I hope is, Cola, that you will not, in your zeal for your fellow-citizens, forget how dear you are to us. No greatness could ever reconcile me to the thought that it brought you danger."

"And I could laugh at all danger if it led to greatness. But greatness, greatness! Vain dream! Let us keep it for our *night* sleep. Enough of *my* plans; now, dearest brother, of yours." And with the sanguine and cheerful elasticity which belonged to him, the young Cola, dismissing all wilder thoughts, bent his mind to listen and to enter into the humbler projects of his brother. The new boat and the holiday dress, and the cot removed to a quarter more secure from the oppression of the barons, and such distant pictures of love as a dark eye and a merry lip conjure up to the vague sentiments of a boy; to schemes and aspirations of which such objects made the limit, — did the scholar listen, with a relaxed brow and a tender smile; and often, in later life, did that conversation occur to him when he shrank from asking his own heart which ambition was the wiser.

"And then," continued the younger brother, "by degrees I might save enough to purchase such a vessel as that which we now see, laden, doubtless, with corn and merchandise, bring-

ing, oh such a good return, that I could fill your room with books, and never hear you complain that you were not rich enough to purchase some crumbling old monkish manuscript. Ah, that would make me so happy!"

Cola smiled as he pressed his brother closer to his breast. "Dear boy," said he, "may it rather be mine to provide for your wishes! Yet methinks the masters of your vessel have no enviable possession; see how anxiously the men look round and behind and before! Peaceful traders though they be, they fear, it seems, even in this city (once the emporium of the civilized world), some pirate in pursuit; and ere the voyage be over, they may find that pirate in a Roman noble. Alas, to what are we reduced!"

The vessel thus referred to was speeding rapidly down the river, and some three or four armed men on deck were indeed intently surveying the quiet banks on either side, as if anticipating a foe. The bark soon, however, glided out of sight, and the brothers fell back upon those themes which require only the future for a text to become attractive to the young.

At length, as the evening darkened, they remembered that it was past the usual hour in which they returned home, and they began to retrace their steps.

"Stay!" said Cola, abruptly. "How our talk has beguiled me! Father Uberto promised me a rare manuscript, which the good friar confesses hath puzzled the whole convent. I was to seek his cell for it this evening. Tarry here a few minutes; it is but half-way up the Aventine. I shall soon return."

"Can I not accompany you?"

"Nay," returned Cola, with considerate kindness, "you have borne toil all the day, and must be wearied; my labors — of the body, at least — have been light enough. You are delicate, too, and seem fatigued already: the rest will refresh you. I shall not be long."

The boy acquiesced, though he rather wished to accompany his brother; but he was of a meek and yielding temper, and seldom resisted the lightest command of those he loved. He sat him down on a little bank by the river-side. and the firm

step and towering form of his brother were soon hid from his gaze by the thick and melancholy foliage.

At first he sat very quietly, enjoying the cool air, and thinking over all the stories of ancient Rome that his brother had told him in their walk. At length he recollected that his little sister Irene had begged him to bring her home some flowers; and gathering such as he could find at hand (and many a flower grew, wild and clustering, over that desolate spot), he again seated himself, and began weaving them into one of those garlands for which the Southern peasantry still retain their ancient affection, and something of their classic skill.

While the boy was thus engaged, the tramp of horses and the loud shouting of men were heard at a distance. They came near, and nearer.

"Some baron's procession, perhaps, returning from a feast," thought the boy. "It will be a pretty sight, their white plumes and scarlet mantles! I love to see such sights, but I will just move out of their way."

So, still mechanically platting his garland, but with eyes turned towards the quarter of the expected procession, the young Roman moved yet nearer towards the river.

Presently the train came in view, — a gallant company, in truth: horsemen in front, riding two abreast, where the path permitted, their steeds caparisoned superbly, their plumes waving gayly, and the gleam of their corselets glittering through the shades of the dusky twilight. A large and miscellaneous crowd, all armed, some with pikes and mail, others with less warlike or worse-fashioned weapons, followed the cavaliers; and high above plume and pike floated the blood-red banner of the Orsini, with the motto and device (in which was ostentatiously displayed the Guelphic badge of the keys of St. Peter) wrought in burnished gold. A momentary fear crossed the boy's mind, for at that time and in that city a nobleman begirt with his swordsmen was more dreaded than a wild beast by the plebeians; but it was already too late to fly, the train were upon him.

"Ho, boy!" cried the leader of the horsemen, Martino di

Porto, one of the great house of the Orsini, "hast thou seen a boat pass up the river? But thou must have seen it: how long since?"

"I saw a large boat about half an hour ago," answered the boy, terrified by the rough voice and imperious bearing of the cavalier.

"Sailing right ahead, with a green flag at the stern?"

"The same, noble sir."

"On, then! We will stop her course ere the moon rise," said the baron. "On! Let the boy go with us, lest he prove traitor and alarm the Colonna."

"An Orsini, an Orsini!" shouted the multitude; "on, on!" and despite the prayers and remonstrances of the boy, he was placed in the thickest of the crowd, and borne, or rather dragged, along with the rest, — frightened, breathless, almost weeping, with his poor little garland still hanging on his arm, while a sling was thrust into his unwilling hand. Still he felt, through all his alarm, a kind of childish curiosity to see the result of the pursuit.

By the loud and eager conversation of those about him he learned that the vessel he had seen contained a supply of corn destined to a fortress up the river held by the Colonna, then at deadly feud with the Orsini; and it was the object of the expedition in which the boy had been thus lucklessly entrained to intercept the provision and divert it to the garrison of Martino di Porto. This news somewhat increased his consternation, for the boy belonged to a family that claimed the patronage of the Colonna.

Anxiously and tearfully he looked with every moment up the steep ascent of the Aventine; but his guardian, his protector, still delayed his appearance.

They had now proceeded some way, when a winding in the road brought suddenly before them the object of their pursuit, as, seen by the light of the earliest stars, it scudded rapidly down the stream.

"Now, the saints be blest!" quoth the chief, "she is ours!"

"Hold!" said a captain (a German) riding next to Martino,

in a half whisper. "I hear sounds which I like not, by yonder trees—hark! the neigh of a horse! By my faith, too, there is the gleam of a corselet!"

"Push on, my masters!" cried Martino. "The heron shall not balk the eagle; push on!"

With renewed shouts, those on foot pushed forward till, as they had nearly gained the copse referred to by the German, a small compact body of horsemen, armed *cap-à-pie*, dashed from amidst the trees, and with spears in their rests charged into the ranks of the pursuers.

"A Colonna! a Colonna!" "An Orsini! an Orsini!" were shouts loudly and fiercely interchanged. Martino di Porto, a man of great bulk and ferocity, and his cavaliers, who were chiefly German mercenaries, met the encounter unshaken. "Beware the bear's hug," cried the Orsini, as down went his antagonist, rider and steed, before his lance.

The contest was short and fierce; the complete armor of the horsemen protected them on either side from wounds. Not so unscathed fared the half-armed foot-followers of the Orsini as they pressed, each pushed on by the other, against the Colonna. After a shower of stones and darts, which fell but as hailstones against the thick mail of the horsemen, they closed in, and by their number obstructed the movements of the steeds, while the spear, sword, and battle-axe of their opponents made ruthless havoc amongst their undisciplined ranks. And Martino, who cared little how many of his mere mob were butchered, seeing that his foes were for the moment embarrassed by the wild rush and gathering circle of his foot train (for the place of conflict, though wider than the previous road, was confined and narrow), made a sign to some of his horsemen, and was about to ride forward towards the boat, now nearly out of sight, when a bugle at some distance was answered by one of his enemy at hand, and the shout of "Colonna to the rescue!" was echoed afar off. A few moments brought in view a numerous train of horse at full speed, with the banners of the Colonna waving gallantly in the front.

"A plague on the wizards! who would have imagined they had divined us so craftily?" muttered Martino. "We must

not abide these odds ; ” and the hand he had first raised for advance now gave the signal of retreat.

Serried breast to breast and in complete order, the horsemen of Martino turned to fly ; the foot rabble who had come for spoil remained but for slaughter. They endeavored to imitate their leaders ; but how could they all elude the rushing chargers and sharp lances of their antagonists, whose blood was heated by the affray, and who regarded the lives at their mercy as a boy regards the wasp’s nest he destroys. The crowd dispersed in all directions, — some, indeed, escaped up the hills, where the footing was impracticable to the horses ; some plunged into the river and swam across to the opposite bank ; those less cool or experienced, who fled right onwards, served, by clogging the way of their enemy, to facilitate the flight of their leaders, but fell themselves, corpse upon corpse, butchered in the unrelenting and unresisted pursuit.

“ No quarter to the ruffians ! Every Orsini slain is a robber the less ! Strike for God, the Emperor, and the Colonna ! ” Such were the shouts which rang the knell of the dismayed and falling fugitives. Among those who fled onward, in the very path most accessible to the cavalry, was the young brother of Cola, so innocently mixed with the affray. Fast he fled, dizzy with terror, poor boy, scarce before ever parted from his parents’ or his brother’s side ! The trees glided past him, the banks receded ; on he sped, and fast behind came the tramp of the hoofs, the shouts, the curses, the fierce laughter of the foe as they bounded over the dead and the dying in their path. He was now at the spot in which his brother had left him. Hastily he glanced behind, and saw the couched lance and horrent crest of the horseman close at his rear ; despairingly he looked up, and behold ! his brother bursting through the tangled brakes that clothed the mountain, and bounding to his succor.

“ Save me, save me, brother ! ” he shrieked aloud, and the shriek reached Cola’s ear. The snort of the fiery charger breathed hot upon him ; a moment more, and with one wild, shrill cry of “ Mercy, mercy ! ” he fell to the ground — a corpse, the lance of the pursuer passing through and through him,

from back to breast, and nailing him on the very sod where he had sat, full of young life and careless hope, not an hour ago.

The horseman plucked forth his spear, and passed on in pursuit of new victims, his comrades following. Cola had descended, was on the spot, kneeling by his murdered brother. Presently, to the sound of horn and trumpet, came by a nobler company than most of those hitherto engaged, who had been, indeed, but the advance-guard of the Colonna. At their head rode a man in years, whose long white hair escaped from his plumed cap and mingled with his venerable beard. "How is this?" said the chief, reining in his steed. "Young Rienzi!"

The youth looked up as he heard that voice, and then flung himself before the steed of the old noble, and, clasping his hands, cried out in a scarce articulate tone: "It is my brother, noble Stephen, — a boy, a mere child; the best, the mildest! See how his blood dabbles the grass! Back, back, your horse's hoofs are in the stream! Justice, my lord, justice! You are a great man."

"Who slew him? An Orsini, doubtless; you shall have justice."

"Thanks, thanks!" murmured Rienzi, as he tottered once more to his brother's side, turned the boy's face from the grass, and strove wildly to feel the pulse of his heart; he drew back his hand hastily, for it was crimsoned with blood, and lifting that hand on high, shrieked out again, "Justice! justice!"

The group round the old Stephen Colonna, hardened as they were in such scenes, were affected by the sight. A handsome boy, whose tears ran fast down his cheeks, and who rode his palfrey close by the side of the Colonna, drew forth his sword. "My lord," said he, half sobbing, "an Orsini only could have butchered a harmless lad like this. Let us lose not a moment; let us on after the ruffians."

"No, Adrian, no!" cried Stephen, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Your zeal is to be lauded, but we must beware an ambush. Our men have ventured too far. What ho, there! Sound a return!"

The bugles in a few minutes brought back the pursuers,

among them the horseman whose spear had been so fatally mis-used. He was the leader of those engaged in the conflict with Martino di Porto, and the gold wrought into his armor, with the gorgeous trappings of his charger, betokened his rank.

"Thanks, my son, thanks," said the old Colonna to this cavalier; "you have done well and bravely. But tell me, knowest thou—for thou hast an eagle eye—which of the Orsini slew this poor boy? A foul deed; his family, too, our clients!"

"Who,—yon lad?" replied the horseman, lifting the helmet from his head and wiping his heated brow. "Say you so? How came he, then, with Martino's rascals? I fear me the mistake hath cost him dear. I could but suppose him of the Orsini rabble, and so—and so—"

"*You* slew him!" cried Rienzi, in a voice of thunder, starting from the ground. "Justice, then, my Lord Stephen; justice! You promised me justice, and I will have it!"

"My poor youth," said the old man, compassionately, "you should have had justice against the Orsini; but see you not this has been an error? I do not wonder you are too grieved to listen to reason now. We must make this up to you."

"And let this pay for masses for the boy's soul; I grieve me much for the accident," said the younger Colonna, flinging down a purse of gold. "Ay, see us at the palace next week, young Cola,—next week! My father, we had best return towards the boat; its safeguard may require us yet."

"Right, Gianni! Stay, some two of you, and see to the poor lad's corpse. A grievous accident; how could it chance?"

The company passed back the way they came, two of the common soldiers alone remaining, except the boy Adrian, who lingered behind a few moments, striving to console Rienzi, who, as one bereft of sense, remained motionless, gazing on the proud array as it swept along, and muttering to himself, "Justice, justice! I will have it yet."

The loud voice of the elder Colonna summoned Adrian, reluctantly and weeping, away. "Let me be your brother," said the gallant boy, affectionately pressing the scholar's hand to his heart; "I want a brother like you."

had deserted Rome for the tranquil retreat of Avignon; and the luxurious town of a foreign province became the court of the Roman pontiff and the throne of the Christian Church.

Thus deprived of even the nominal check of the papal presence, the power of the nobles might be said to have no limits save their own caprice or their mutual jealousies and feuds. Though arrogating through fabulous genealogies their descent from the ancient Romans, they were in reality, for the most part, the sons of the bolder barbarians of the North; and contaminated by the craft of Italy, rather than imbued with its national affections, they retained the disdain of their foreign ancestors for a conquered soil and a degenerate people. While the rest of Italy, especially in Florence, in Venice, and in Milan, was fast and far advancing beyond the other states of Europe in civilization and in art, the Romans appeared rather to recede than to improve, — unblest by laws, unvisited by art, strangers at once to the chivalry of a warlike, and the graces of a peaceful people. But they still possessed the sense and desire of liberty, and by ferocious paroxysms and desperate struggles sought to vindicate for their city the title it still assumed of "the Metropolis of the World." For the last two centuries they had known various revolutions, — brief, often bloody, and always unsuccessful. Still, there was the empty pageant of a popular form of government. The thirteen quarters of the city named each a chief; and the assembly of these magistrates, called *Caporioni*, by theory possessed an authority they had neither the power nor the courage to exert. Still there was the proud name of Senator; but at the present time the office was confined to one or to two persons, sometimes elected by the Pope, sometimes by the nobles. The authority attached to the name seems to have had no definite limit; it was that of a stern dictator or an indolent puppet, according as he who held it had the power to enforce the dignity he assumed. It was never conceded but to nobles, and it was by the nobles that all the outrages were committed. Private enmity alone was gratified whenever public justice was invoked; and the vindication of order was but the execution of revenge.

Holding their palaces as the castles and fortresses of princes, each asserting his own independency of all authority and law, and planting fortifications and claiming principalities in the patrimonial territories of the Church, the barons of Rome made their state still more secure, and still more odious, by the maintenance of troops of foreign (chiefly of German) mercenaries, at once braver in disposition, more disciplined in service, and more skilful in arms, than even the freest Italians of that time. Thus they united the judicial and the military force, not for the protection, but for the ruin of Rome. Of these barons, the most powerful were the Orsini and Colonna; their feuds were hereditary and incessant, and every day witnessed the fruits of their lawless warfare in bloodshed, in rape, and in conflagration. The flattery or the friendship of Petrarch, too credulously believed by modern historians, has invested the Colonna, especially of the date now entered upon, with an elegance and a dignity not their own. Outrage, fraud, and assassination, a sordid avarice in securing lucrative offices to themselves, an insolent oppression of their citizens, and the most dastardly cringing to power superior to their own (with but few exceptions), mark the character of the first family of Rome. But wealthier than the rest of the barons, they were therefore more luxurious, and perhaps more intellectual; and their pride was flattered in being patrons of those arts of which they could never have become the professors. From these multiplied oppressors the Roman citizens turned, with fond and impatient regret, to their ignorant and dark notions of departed liberty and greatness. They confounded the times of the Empire with those of the Republic, and often looked to the Teutonic king who obtained his election from beyond the Alps, but his *title* of emperor from the Romans, as the deserter of his legitimate trust and proper home; vainly imagining that if both the Emperor and the Pontiff fixed their residence in Rome, Liberty and Law would again seek their natural shelter beneath the resuscitated majesty of the Roman people.

The absence of the Pope and the papal court served greatly to impoverish the citizens; and they had suffered yet more

visibly by the depredations of hordes of robbers, numerous and unsparing, who infested Romagna, obstructing all the public ways, and were, sometimes secretly, sometimes openly, protected by the barons, who often recruited their banditti garrisons by banditti soldiers.

But besides the lesser and ignobler robbers, there had risen in Italy a far more formidable description of freebooters. A German, who assumed the lofty title of the Duke Werner, had, a few years prior to the period we approach, enlisted and organized a considerable force, styled "The Great Company," with which he besieged cities and invaded states, without any object less shameless than that of pillage. His example was soon imitated; numerous "Companies," similarly constituted, devastated the distracted and divided land. They appeared, suddenly raised, as if by magic, before the walls of a city, and demanded immense sums as the purchase of peace. Neither tyrant nor commonwealth maintained a force sufficient to resist them; and if other northern mercenaries were engaged to oppose them, it was only to recruit the standards of the freebooters with deserters. Mercenary fought not mercenary, nor German German; and greater pay and more unbridled rapine made the tents of the "Companies" far more attractive than the regulated stipends of a city, or the dull fortress and impoverished coffers of a chief. Werner, the most implacable and ferocious of all these adventurers, and who had so openly gloried in his enormities as to wear upon his breast a silver plate engraved with the words "Enemy to God, to Pity, and to Mercy," had not long since ravaged Romagna with fire and sword. But, whether induced by money, or unable to control the fierce spirits he had raised, he afterwards led the bulk of his company back to Germany. Small detachments, however, remained, scattered throughout the land, waiting only an able leader once more to re-unite them. Amongst those who appeared most fitted for that destiny was Walter de Montreal, a Knight of St. John and gentleman of Provence, whose valor and military genius had already, though yet young, raised his name into dreaded celebrity, and whose ambition, experience, and sagacity, relieved by certain chivalric and noble qualities,

were suited to enterprises far greater and more important than the violent depredations of the atrocious Werner. From these scourges no state had suffered more grievously than Rome. The patrimonial territories of the Pope — in part wrested from him by petty tyrants, in part laid waste by these foreign robbers — yielded but a scanty supply to the necessities of Clement VI., the most accomplished gentleman and the most graceful voluptuary of his time; and the good father had devised a plan whereby to enrich at once the Romans and their pontiff.

Nearly fifty years before the time we enter upon, in order both to replenish the papal coffers and pacify the starving Romans, Boniface VIII. had instituted the Festival of the Jubilee, or Holy Year, — in fact, a revival of a pagan ceremonial. A plenary indulgence was promised to every Catholic who in that year and in the first year of every succeeding century should visit the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. An immense concourse of pilgrims, from every part of Christendom, had attested the wisdom of the invention; “and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect without counting the heaps of gold and silver that were poured on the altar of St. Paul.”¹

It is not to be wondered at that this most lucrative festival should, ere the next century was half expired, appear to a discreet pontiff to be too long postponed; and both Pope and city agreed in thinking it might well bear a less distant renewal. Accordingly, Clement VI. had proclaimed, under the name of the *Mosaic Jubilee*, a second Holy Year for 1350, — namely, three years distant from that date at which, in the next chapter, my narrative will commence. This circumstance had a great effect in whetting the popular indignation against the barons, and preparing the events I shall relate; for the roads were, as I before said, infested by the banditti, — the creatures and allies of the barons. And if the roads were not cleared, the pilgrims might not attend. It was the object of the Pope’s vicar, Raimond, bishop of Orvietto (bad politician and good canonist), to seek, by every means, to remove all imped-

¹ Gibbon, vol. xii. c. 59.

iment between the offerings of devotion and the treasury of Saint Peter.

Such, in brief, was the state of Rome at the period we are about to examine. Her ancient mantle of renown still, in the eyes of Italy and of Europe, cloaked her ruins. In name, at least, she was still the queen of the earth; and from her hands came the crown of the Emperor of the North, and the keys of the Father of the Church. Her situation was precisely that which presented a vast and glittering triumph to bold ambition, an inspiring, if mournful, spectacle to determined patriotism, and a fitting stage for that more august tragedy which seeks its incidents, selects its actors, and shapes its moral amidst the vicissitudes and crimes of nations.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRAWL.

ON an evening in April, 1347, and in one of those wide spaces in which Modern and Ancient Rome seemed blent together, — equally desolate and equally in ruins, — a miscellaneous and indignant populace were assembled. That morning the house of a Roman jeweller had been forcibly entered and pillaged by the soldiers of Martino di Porto, with a daring effrontery which surpassed even the ordinary license of the barons. The sympathy and sensation throughout the city were deep and ominous.

"Never will I submit to this tyranny!"

"Nor I!"

"Nor I!"

"Nor, by the bones of Saint Peter, will I!"

"And what, my friends, is this tyranny to which you will not submit?" said a young nobleman, addressing himself to the crowd of citizens who, heated, angry, half-armed, and with the vehement gestures of Italian passion, were now sweeping

down the long and narrow street that led to the gloomy quarter occupied by the Orsini.

"Ah, my lord!" cried two or three of the citizens in a breath, "you will right us; you will see justice done to us; you are a Colonna!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed scornfully one man of gigantic frame, and wielding on high a huge hammer, indicative of his trade. "Justice and Colonna! Body of God, those names are not often found together!"

"Down with him! Down with him! He is an Orsunist, — down with him!" cried at least ten of the throng; but no hand was raised against the giant.

"He speaks the truth," said a second voice, firmly.

"Ay, that doth he," said a third, knitting his brows and unsheathing his knife, "and we will abide by it! The Orsini are tyrants, — and the Colonnas are, at the best, as bad."

"Thou liest in thy teeth, ruffian!" cried the young noble, advancing into the press and confronting the last asperser of the Colonna.

Before the flashing eye and menacing gesture of the cavalier, the worthy brawler retreated some steps, so as to leave an open space between the towering form of the smith and the small, slender, but vigorous frame of the young noble.

Taught from their birth to despise the courage of the plebeians, even while careless of much reputation as to their own, the patricians of Rome were not unaccustomed to the rude fellowship of these brawls; nor was it unoften that the mere presence of a noble sufficed to scatter whole crowds that had the moment before been breathing vengeance against his order and his house.

Waving his hand, therefore, to the smith, and utterly unheeding either his brandished weapon or his vast stature, the young Adrian di Castello, a distant kinsman of the Colonna, haughtily bade him give way.

"To your homes, friends! And know," he added, with some dignity, "that ye wrong us much if ye imagine we share the evil-doings of the Orsini, or are pandering solely to our own passions in the feud between their house and ours. May the

Holy Mother so judge me," continued he, devoutly lifting up his eyes, "as I now with truth declare that it is for your wrongs, and for the wrongs of Rome, that I have drawn this sword against the Orsini!"

"So say all the tyrants," rejoined the smith, hardily, as he leant his hammer against a fragment of stone, — some remnant of ancient Rome, — "they never fight against each other but it is for our good. One Colonna cuts me the throat of Orsini's baker — it is for our good! another Colonna seizes on the daughter of Orsini's tailor — it is for our good! *Our* good, — yes, for the good of the people; the good of the bakers and tailors, eh?"

"Fellow," said the young nobleman, gravely, "if a Colonna did thus, he did wrong; but the holiest cause may have bad supporters."

"Yes, the Holy Church itself is propped on very indifferent columns," answered the smith, in a rude witticism on the affection of the Pope for the Colonna.

"He blasphemes! the smith blasphemes!" cried the partisans of that powerful house. "A Colonna, a Colonna!"

"An Orsini, an Orsini!" was no less promptly the counter-cry.

"THE PEOPLE!" shouted the smith, waving his formidable weapon far above the heads of the group.

In an instant the whole throng, who had at first united against the aggression of one man, were divided by the hereditary wrath of faction. At the cry of Orsini, several new partisans hurried to the spot; the friends of the Colonna drew themselves on one side, the defenders of the Orsini on the other; and the few who agreed with the smith that both factions were equally odious, and the people was the sole legitimate cry in a popular commotion, would have withdrawn themselves from the approaching *mêlée*, if the smith himself, who was looked upon by them as an authority of great influence, had not — whether from resentment at the haughty bearing of the young Colonna, or from that appetite of contest not uncommon in men of a bulk and force which assure them in all personal affrays the lofty pleasure of superiority —

if, I say, the smith himself had not, after a pause of indecision, retired among the Orsini, and entrained, by his example, the alliance of his friends with the favorers of that faction.

In popular commotions each man is whirled along with the herd, often half against his own approbation or assent. The few words of peace by which Adrian di Castello commenced an address to his friends were drowned amidst their shouts. Proud to find in their ranks one of the most beloved and one of the noblest of that name, the partisans of the Colonna placed him in their front and charged impetuously on their foes. Adrian, however, who had acquired from circumstances something of that chivalrous code which he certainly could not have owed to his Roman birth, disdained at first to assault men among whom he recognized no equal either in rank or the practice of arms. He contented himself with putting aside the few strokes that were aimed at him in the gathering confusion of the conflict, — few; for those who recognized him, even amidst the bitterest partisans of the Orsini, were not willing to expose themselves to the danger and odium of spilling the blood of a man who, in addition to his great birth and the terrible power of his connections, was possessed of a personal popularity which he owed rather to a comparison with the vices of his relatives than to any remarkable virtues hitherto displayed by himself. The smith alone, who had as yet taken no active part in the fray, seemed to gather himself up in determined opposition as the cavalier now advanced within a few steps of him.

“Did we not tell thee,” quoth the giant, frowning, “that the Colonna were, not less than the Orsini, the foes of the people? Look at thy followers and clients: are they not cutting the throats of humble men by way of vengeance for the crime of a great one? But that is the way one patrician always scourges the insolence of another. He lays the rod on the backs of the people, and then cries, ‘See how just I am!’”

“I do not answer thee now,” answered Adrian; “but if thou regrettest with me this waste of blood, join with me in attempting to prevent it.”

“I — not I! Let the blood of the slaves flow to-day; the

time is fast coming when it shall be washed away by the blood of the lords."

"Away, ruffian!" said Adrian, seeking no further parley, and touching the smith with the flat side of his sword. In an instant the hammer of the smith swung in the air, and but for the active spring of the young noble would infallibly have crushed him to the earth. Ere the smith could gain time for a second blow, Adrian's sword passed twice through his right arm, and the weapon fell heavily to the ground.

"Slay him, slay him!" cried several of the clients of the Colonna, now pressing, dastard-like, round the disarmed and disabled smith

"Ay, slay him!" said, in tolerable Italian but with a barbarous accent, one man, half-clad in armor, who had but just joined the group, and who was one of those wild German bandits whom the Colonna held in their pay; "he belongs to a horrible gang of miscreants sworn against all order and peace. He is one of Rienzi's followers, and, bless the Three Kings! raves about the People."

"Thou sayest right, barbarian," said the sturdy smith, in a loud voice, and tearing aside the vest from his breast with his left hand. "Come all,—Colonna and Orsini,—dig to this heart with your sharp blades; and when you have reached the centre, you will find there the object of your common hatred,—'Rienzi and the People!'"

As he uttered these words, in language that would have seemed above his station if a certain glow and exaggeration of phrase and sentiment were not common, when excited, to all the Romans, the loudness of his voice rose above the noise immediately round him, and stilled for an instant the general din; and when, at last, the words "Rienzi and the People" rang forth, they penetrated midway through the increasing crowd, and were answered, as by an echo, with a hundred voices, "Rienzi and the People!"

But whatever impression the words of the mechanic made on others, it was equally visible in the young Colonna. At the name of Rienzi the glow of excitement vanished from his cheek, he started back, muttered to himself, and for a moment

seemed, even in the midst of that stirring commotion, to be lost in a moody and distant revery. He recovered as the shout died away; and saying to the smith, in a low tone, "Friend, I am sorry for thy wound; but seek me on the morrow, and thou shalt find thou hast wronged me," he beckoned to the German to follow him, and threaded his way through the crowd, which generally gave back as he advanced. For the bitterest hatred to the order of the nobles was at that time in Rome mingled with a servile respect for their persons and a mysterious awe of their uncontrollable power.

As Adrian passed through that part of the crowd in which the fray had not yet commenced, the murmurs that followed him were not those which many of his race could have heard.

"A Colonna," said one.

"Yet no ravisher," said another, laughing wildly.

"Nor murderer," muttered a third, pressing his hand to his breast. "'T is not against *him* that my father's blood cries aloud."

"Bless him!" said a fourth; "for as yet no man curses him."

"Ah, God help us!" said an old man with a long gray beard, leaning on his staff. "The serpent's young yet; the fangs will show by and by."

"For shame, father! he is a comely youth and not proud in the least. What a smile he hath!" quoth a fair matron who kept on the outskirts of the *mêlée*.

"Farewell to a man's honor when a noble smiles on his wife!" was the answer.

"Nay," said Luigi, a jolly butcher with a roguish eye, "what a man can win fairly from maid or wife, that let him do, whether plebeian or noble, — that's my morality; but when an ugly old patrician finds fair words will not win fair looks, and carries me off a dame on the back of a German boar, with a stab in the side for comfort to the spouse, then, I say, he is a wicked man and an adulterer."

While such were the comments and the murmurs that followed the noble, very different were the looks and words that attended the German soldier.

Equally, nay, with even greater promptitude, did the crowd make way at his armed and heavy tread; but not with looks of reverence. The eye glared as he approached, but the cheek grew pale, the head bowed, the lip quivered; each man felt a shudder of hate and fear, as recognizing a dread and mortal foe. And well and wrathfully did the fierce mercenary note the signs of the general aversion. He pushed on rudely, half-smiling in contempt, half-frowning in revenge, as he looked from side to side; and his long, matted light hair, tawny-colored mustache, and brawny front contrasted strongly with the dark eyes, raven locks, and slender frames of the Italians.

"May Lucifer double damn those German cut-throats!" muttered, between his grinded teeth, one of the citizens.

"Amen!" answered heartily another.

"Hush!" said a third, timorously looking round; "if one of them hear thee thou art a lost man."

"O Rome, Rome! to what art thou fallen!" said bitterly one citizen, clothed in black and of a higher seeming than the rest, "when thou shudderest in thy streets at the tread of a hired barbarian!"

"Hark to one of our learned men and rich citizens!" said the butcher, reverently.

"'Tis a friend of Rienzi," quoth another of the group, lifting his cap.

With downcast eyes and a face in which grief, shame, and wrath were visibly expressed, Pandulfo di Guido, a citizen of birth and repute, swept slowly through the crowd and disappeared.

Meanwhile Adrian, having gained a street which, though in the neighborhood of the crowd, was empty and desolate, turned to his fierce comrade. "Rodolf," said he, "mark! no violence to the citizens. Return to the crowd, collect the friends of our house, withdraw them from the scene: let not the Colonna be blamed for this day's violence; and assure our followers, in my name, that I swear, by the knighthood I received at the Emperor's hands, that by my sword shall Martino di Porto be punished for his outrage. Fain would I in person allay the

tumult, but my presence only seems to sanction it. Go; thou hast weight with them all."

"Ay, Signor, the weight of blows!" answered the grim soldier. "But the command is hard; I would fain let their puddle-blood flow an hour or two longer. Yet, pardon me: in obeying thy orders, do I obey those of my master, thy kinsman? It is old Stephen Colonna, who seldom spares blood or treasure, God bless him (save his own!), whose money I hold, and to whose hests I am sworn."

"Diavolo!" muttered the cavalier, and the angry spot was on his cheek; but with the habitual self-control of the Italian nobles he smothered his rising choler, and said aloud, with calmness but dignity, —

"Do as I bid thee, — check this tumult; make us the forbearing party. Let all be still within one hour hence, and call on me to-morrow for thy reward; be this purse an earnest of my future thanks. As for my kinsman, whom I command thee to name more reverently, 'tis in his name I speak. Hark! the din increases, the contest swells; go, lose not another moment."

Somewhat awed by the quiet firmness of the patrician, Rodolf nodded without answer, slid the money into his bosom, and stalked away into the thickest of the throng. But even ere he arrived, a sudden reaction had taken place.

The young cavalier, left alone in that spot, followed with his eyes the receding form of the mercenary as the sun, now setting, shone slant upon his glittering casque, and said bitterly to himself: "Unfortunate city, fountain of all mighty memories, fallen queen of a thousand nations, how art thou decrowned and spoiled by thy recreant and apostate children! Thy nobles divided against themselves, thy people cursing thy nobles, thy priests, who should sow peace, planting discord, the Father of thy Church deserting thy stately walls, his home a refuge, his mitre a fief, his court a Gallic village; and we, we of the haughtiest blood of Rome, we, the sons of Cæsars and of the lineage of demigods, guarding an insolent and abhorred state by the swords of hirelings who mock our cowardice while they receive our pay, who keep our citizens slaves, and lord it

over their very masters in return! Oh that we, the hereditary chiefs of Rome, could but feel, oh that we could but find, our only legitimate safeguard in the grateful hearts of our countrymen!"

So deeply did the young Adrian feel the galling truth of all he uttered, that the indignant tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke. He felt no shame as he dashed them away; for that weakness which weeps for a fallen race is the tenderness, not of women, but of angels.

As he turned slowly to quit the spot, his steps were suddenly arrested by a loud shout; "Rienzi! Rienzi!" smote the air. From the walls of the Capitol to the bed of the glittering Tiber, that name echoed far and wide; and as the shout died away, it was swallowed up in a silence so profound, so universal, so breathless that you might have imagined that death itself had fallen over the city. And now, at the extreme end of the crowd, and elevated above their level, on vast fragments of stone which had been dragged from the ruins of Rome in one of the late frequent tumults between contending factions, to serve as a barricade for citizens against citizens, — on these silent memorials of the past grandeur, the present misery, of Rome, stood that extraordinary man, who above all his race was the most penetrated with the glories of the one time, with the degradation of the other.

From the distance at which he stood from the scene, Adrian could only distinguish the dark outline of Rienzi's form; he could only hear the faint sound of his mighty voice; he could only perceive, in the subdued yet waving sea of human beings that spread around, their heads bared in the last rays of the sun, the unutterable effect which an eloquence, described by contemporaries almost as miraculous, — but in reality less so from the genius of the man than the sympathy of the audience, — created in all who drank into their hearts and souls the stream of its burning thoughts.

It was but for a short time that that form was visible to the earnest eye, that that voice at intervals reached the straining ear, of Adrian di Castello; but that time sufficed to produce all the effect which Adrian himself had desired.

Another shout, more earnest, more prolonged than the first, — a shout in which spoke the release of swelling thoughts, of intense excitement, — betokened the close of the harangue; and then you might see, after a minute's pause, the crowd breaking in all directions, and pouring down the avenues in various knots and groups, each testifying the strong and lasting impression made upon the multitude by that address. Every cheek was flushed, every tongue spoke; the animation of the orator had passed like a living spirit into the breasts of the audience. He had thundered against the disorders of the patricians, yet by a word he had disarmed the anger of the plebeians; he had preached freedom, yet he had opposed license. He had calmed the present by a promise of the future. He had chid their quarrels, yet had supported their cause. He had mastered the revenge of to-day by a solemn assurance that there should come justice for the morrow. So great may be the power, so mighty the eloquence, so formidable the genius, of one man, without arms, without rank, without sword or ermine, who addresses himself to a people that is oppressed!

CHAPTER IV.

AN ADVENTURE.

AVOIDING the broken streams of the dispersed crowd, Adrian Colonna strode rapidly down one of the narrow streets leading to his palace, which was situated at no inconsiderable distance from the place in which the late contest had occurred. The education of his life made him feel a profound interest, not only in the divisions and disputes of his country, but also in the scene he had just witnessed, and the authority exercised by Rienzi.

An orphan of a younger, but opulent branch of the Colonna, Adrian had been brought up under the care and guardianship of his kinsman, that astute, yet valiant Stephen Colonna, who

of all the nobles of Rome was the most powerful, alike from the favor of the Pope and the number of armed hirelings whom his wealth enabled him to maintain. Adrian had early manifested what in that age was considered an extraordinary disposition towards intellectual pursuits, and had acquired much of the little that was then known of the ancient language and the ancient history of his country.

Though Adrian was but a boy at the time in which, first presented to the reader, he witnessed the emotions of Rienzi at the death of his brother, his kind heart had been penetrated with sympathy for Cola's affliction, and shame for the apathy of his kinsmen at the result of their own feuds. He had earnestly sought the friendship of Rienzi, and, despite his years, had become aware of the power and energy of his character. But though Rienzi, after a short time, had appeared to think no more of his brother's death, though he again entered the halls of the Colonna and shared their disdainful hospitalities, he maintained a certain distance and reserve of manner, which even Adrian could only partially overcome. He rejected every offer of service, favor, or promotion; and any unwonted proof of kindness from Adrian seemed, instead of making him more familiar, to offend him into colder distance. The easy humor and conversational vivacity which had first rendered him a welcome guest with those who passed their lives between fighting and feasting, had changed into a vein ironical, cynical, and severe. But the dull barons were equally amused at his wit, and Adrian was almost the only one who detected the serpent couched beneath the smile.

Often Rienzi sat at the feast silent, but observant, as if watching every look, weighing every word, taking gauge and measurement of the intellect, policy, temperament, of every guest; and when he had seemed to satisfy himself, his spirits would rise, his words flow; and while his dazzling but bitter wit lit up the revel, none saw that the unmirthful flash was the token of the coming storm. But all the while he neglected no occasion to mix with the humbler citizens, to stir up their minds, to inflame their imaginations, to kindle their emulation, with pictures of the present and with legends of the

past. He grew in popularity and repute, and was yet more in power with the herd, because in favor with the nobles. Perhaps it was for that reason that he had continued the guest of the Colonna.

When, six years before the present date, the Capitol of the Cæsars witnessed the triumph of Petrarch, the scholastic fame of the young Rienzi had attracted the friendship of the poet,—a friendship that continued, with slight interruption, to the last, through careers so widely different; and afterwards, one among the Roman deputies to Avignon, he had been conjoined with Petrarch¹ to supplicate Clement VI. to remove the Holy See from Avignon to Rome. It was in this mission that, for the first time, he evinced his extraordinary powers of eloquence and persuasion. The pontiff, indeed, more desirous of ease than glory, was not convinced by the arguments, but he was enchanted with the pleader; and Rienzi returned to Rome loaded with honors, and clothed with the dignity of high and responsible office. No longer the inactive scholar, the gay companion, he rose at once to pre-eminence above all his fellow-citizens. Never before had authority been borne with so austere an integrity, so uncorrupt a zeal. He had sought to impregnate his colleagues with the same loftiness of principle; he had failed. Now secure in his footing, he had begun openly to appeal to the people; and already a new spirit seemed to animate the populace of Rome.

While these were the fortunes of Rienzi, Adrian had been long separated from him, and absent from Rome.

The Colonna were stanch supporters of the imperial party, and Adrian di Castello had received and obeyed an invitation to the Emperor's Court. Under that monarch he had initiated himself in arms, and among the knights of Germany he had learned to temper the natural Italian shrewdness with the chivalry of Northern valor.

In leaving Bavaria he had sojourned a short time in the

¹ According to the modern historians; but it seems more probable that Rienzi's mission to Avignon was posterior to that of Petrarch. However this be, it was at Avignon that Petrarch and Rienzi became most intimate, as Petrarch himself observes in one of his letters.

solitude of one of his estates by the fairest lake of Northern Italy; and thence, with a mind improved alike by action and study, had visited many of the free Italian states, imbibed sentiments less prejudiced than those of his order, and acquired an early reputation for himself while inly marking the characters and deeds of others. In him the best qualities of the Italian noble were united. Passionately addicted to the cultivation of letters, subtle and profound in policy, gentle and bland of manner, dignifying a love of pleasure with a certain elevation of taste, he yet possessed a gallantry of conduct and purity of honor, and an aversion from cruelty, which were then very rarely found in the Italian temperament, and which even the Chivalry of the North, while maintaining among themselves, usually abandoned the moment they came into contact with the systematic craft and disdain of honesty which made the character of the ferocious, yet wily South. With these qualities he combined, indeed, the softer passions of his countrymen,—he adored Beauty, and he made a deity of Love.

He had but a few weeks returned to his native city, whither his reputation had already preceded him, and where his early affection for letters and gentleness of bearing were still remembered. He returned to find the position of Rienzi far more altered than his own. Adrian had not yet sought the scholar. He wished first to judge with his own eyes, and at a distance, of the motives and object of his conduct; for partly he caught the suspicions which his own order entertained of Rienzi, and partly he shared in the trustful enthusiasm of the people.

"Certainly," said he now to himself, as he walked musingly onward, "certainly no man has it more in his power to reform our diseased state, to heal our divisions, to awaken our citizens to the recollections of ancestral virtue. But that very power, how dangerous is it! Have I not seen, in the free states of Italy, men, called into authority for the sake of preserving the people, honest themselves at first, and then, drunk with the sudden rank, betraying the very cause which had exalted them? True, those men were chiefs and nobles; but are plebeians less

human? Howbeit I have heard and seen enough from afar; I will now approach, and examine the man himself."

While thus soliloquizing, Adrian but little noted the various passengers, who, more and more rarely as the evening waned, hastened homeward. Among these were two females, who now alone shared with Adrian the long and gloomy street into which he had entered. The moon was already bright in the heavens, and as the women passed the cavalier with a light and quick step, the younger one turned back and regarded him by the clear light with an eager, yet timid glance.

"Why dost thou tremble, my pretty one?" said her companion, who might have told some five and forty years, and whose garb and voice bespoke her of inferior rank to the younger female. "The streets seem quiet enough now, and, the Virgin be praised! we are not so far from home either."

"Oh, Benedetta, it is *he*! it is the young signor; it is Adrian!"

"That is fortunate," said the nurse, for such was her condition, "since they say he is as bold as a Northman; and as the Palazzo Colonna is not very far from hence, we shall be within reach of his aid, should we want it,—that is to say, sweet one, if you will walk a little slower than you have yet done."

The young lady slackened her pace, and sighed.

"He is certainly very handsome," quoth the nurse; "but thou must not think more of him,—he is too far above thee for marriage, and for aught else thou art too honest and thy brother too proud —"

"And thou, Benedetta, art too quick with thy tongue. How canst thou talk thus, when thou knowest he hath never, since, at least, I was a mere child, even addressed me? Nay, he scarce knows of my very existence. He, the Lord Adrian di Castello, dream of the poor Irene! The mere thought is madness!"

"Then why," said the nurse, briskly, "dost thou dream of *him*?"

Her companion sighed again more deeply than at first.

"Holy Saint Catherine!" continued Benedetta, "if there were

but one man in the world, I would die single ere I would think of him, — until, at least, he had kissed my hand twice, and left it my own fault if it were not my lips instead."

The young lady still replied not.

"But how didst thou contrive to love him?" asked the nurse. "Thou canst not have seen him very often; it is but some four or five weeks since his return to Rome."

"Oh, how dull art thou!" answered the fair Irene. "Have I not told thee, again and again, that I loved him six years ago?"

"When thou hadst told but thy tenth year, and a doll would have been thy most suitable lover! As I am a Christian, Signora, thou hast made good use of thy time!"

"And during his absence," continued the girl, fondly, yet sadly, "did I not hear him spoken of, and was not the mere sound of his name like a love-gift that bade me remember? And when they praised him, have I not rejoiced; and when they blamed him, have I not resented? And when they said that his lance was victorious in the tourney, did I not weep with pride; and when they whispered that his vows were welcome in the bower, wept I not as fervently with grief? Have not the six years of his absence been a dream, and was not his return a waking into light, — a morning of glory and the sun? And I see him now in the church when he wots not of me, and on his happy steed as he passes by my lattice; and is not that enough of happiness for love?"

"But if he loves not *thee*?"

"Fool! I ask not that, — nay, I know not if I wish it. Perhaps I would rather dream of him such as I would have him, than know him for what he is. He might be unkind, or ungenerous, or love me but little; rather would I not be loved at all than loved coldly, and eat away my heart by comparing it with his. I can love him now as something abstract, unreal, and divine; but what would be my shame, my grief, if I were to find him less than I have imagined! Then, indeed, my life would have been wasted; then, indeed, the beauty of the earth would be gone!"

The good nurse was not very capable of sympathizing with

sentiments like these. Even had their characters been more alike, their disparity of age would have rendered such sympathy impossible. What but youth can echo back the soul of youth, — all the music of its wild vanities and romantic follies? The good nurse did not sympathize with the sentiments of her young lady, but she sympathized with the deep earnestness with which they were expressed. She thought it wondrous silly, but wondrous moving; she wiped her eyes with the corner of her veil, and hoped in her secret heart that her young charge would soon get a real husband, to put such unsubstantial fantasies out of her head. There was a short pause in their conversation, when, just where two streets crossed one another, there was heard a loud noise of laughing voices and trampling feet. Torches were seen on high, affronting the pale light of the moon; and at a very short distance from the two females, in the cross street, advanced a company of seven or eight men, bearing, as seen by the red light of the torches, the formidable badge of the Orsini.

Amidst the other disorders of the time, it was no infrequent custom for the younger or more dissolute of the nobles, in small and armed companies, to parade the streets at night, seeking occasion for a licentious gallantry among the cowering citizens, or a skirmish at arms with some rival stragglers of their own order. Such a band had Irene and her companion now chanced to encounter.

"Holy Mother!" cried Benedetta, turning pale, and half running, "what curse has befallen us? How could we have been so foolish as to tarry so late at the Lady Nina's! Run, Signora, run, or we shall fall into their hands!"

But the advice of Benedetta came too late, — the fluttering garments of the women had been already descried; in a moment more they were surrounded by the marauders. A rude hand tore aside Benedetta's veil, and at sight of features, which, if time had not spared, it could never very materially injure, the rough aggressor cast the poor nurse against the wall with a curse, which was echoed by a loud laugh from his comrades.

"Thou hast a fine fortune in faces, Giuseppe!"

"Yes; it was but the other day that he seized on a girl of sixty."

"And then, by way of improving her beauty, cut her across the face with his dagger because she was not sixteen!"

"Hush, fellows! whom have we here?" said the chief of the party, a man richly dressed, and who, though bordering upon middle age, had only the more accustomed himself to the excesses of youth; as he spoke, he snatched the trembling Irene from the grasp of his followers. "Ho, there, the torches! *Oh che bella faccia!* what blushes, what eyes! Nay, look not down, pretty one; thou needst not be ashamed to win the love of an Orsini! Yes; know the triumph thou hast achieved, — it is Martino di Porto who bids thee smile upon him!"

"For the blest Mother's sake release me! Nay, sir, this must not be; I am not unfriended, — this insult shall not pass!"

"Hark to her silver chiding; it is better than my best hound's bay! This adventure is worth a month's watching. What, will you not come? Restive, shrieks too! Francesco, Pietro, — ye are the gentlest of the band, — wrap her veil around her; muffle this music. So! bear her before me to the palace, and to-morrow, sweet one, thou shalt go home with a basket of florins, which thou mayst say thou hast bought at market."

But Irene's shrieks, Irene's struggles, had already brought succor to her side; and as Adrian approached the spot, the nurse flung herself on her knees before him.

"Oh, sweet Signor, for Christ's grace save us! Deliver my young mistress; her friends love you well! We are all for the Colonna, my lord, — yes, indeed, all for the Colonna! Save the kin of your own clients, gracious Signor!"

"It is enough that she is a woman," answered Adrian, adding, between his teeth, "and that an Orsini is her assailant." He strode haughtily into the thickest of the group; the servitors laid hands on their swords, but gave way before him as they recognized his person; he reached the two men who had already seized Irene; in one moment he struck the foremost to the ground, in another he had passed his left arm round the light and slender form of the maiden, and stood confronting

the Orsini with his drawn blade, which, however, he pointed to the ground.

"For shame, my lord, for shame!" said he, indignantly. "Will you force Rome to rise, to a man, against our order? Vex not too far the lion, chained though he be; war against *us* if ye will; draw your blades upon *men*, though they be of your own race, and speak your own tongue: but if ye would sleep at nights and not dread the avenger's gripe, if ye would walk the market-place secure, wrong not a Roman woman! Yes, the very walls around us preach to you the punishment of such a deed. For that offence fell the Tarquins; for that offence were swept away the Decemvirs; for that offence, if ye rush upon it, the blood of your whole house may flow like water. Cease then, my lord, from this mad attempt, so unworthy your great name; cease, and thank even a Colonna that he has come between you and a moment's frenzy!"

So noble, so lofty were the air and gesture of Adrian as he thus spoke, that even the rude servitors felt a thrill of approbation and remorse. Not so Martino di Porto. He had been struck with the beauty of the prey thus suddenly snatched from him; he had been accustomed to long outrage and to long impunity; the very sight, the very voice of a Colonna, was a blight to his eye, and a discord to his ear: what, then, when a Colonna interfered with his lusts and rebuked his vices?

"Pedant!" he cried, with quivering lips, "prate not to me of thy vain legends and gossip's tales; think not to snatch from me my possession in another, when thine own life is in my hands! Unhand the maiden, throw down thy sword, return home without further parley; or by my faith and the blades of my followers — look at them well — thou diest!"

"Signor," said Adrian, calmly, yet while he spoke he retreated gradually with his fair burden towards the neighboring wall, so as at least to leave only his front exposed to those fearful odds, "thou wilt not so misuse the present chances, and wrong thyself in men's mouths, as to attack with eight swords even thy hereditary foe, thus cumbered, too, as he is. But — nay, hold! — if thou art so proposed, bethink thee well, one cry

of my voice would soon turn the odds against thee. Thou art now in the quarter of my tribe ; thou art surrounded by the habitations of the Colonna ; yon palace swarms with men who sleep not, save with harness on their backs, — men whom my voice can reach even now, but from whom, if they once taste of blood, it could not save thee ! ”

“ He speaks true, noble lord,” said one of the band ; “ we have wandered too far out of our beat, — we are in their very den ; the palace of old Stephen Colonna is within call ; and to my knowledge,” added he, in a whisper, “ eighteen fresh men-of-arms — ay, and Northmen too — marched through its gates this day.”

“ Were there eight hundred men at arm’s length,” answered Martino, furiously, “ I would not be thus bearded amidst mine own train. Away with yon woman ! To the attack, to the attack ! ”

Thus saying, he made a desperate lunge at Adrian, who, having kept his eye cautiously on the movements of his enemy, was not unprepared for the assault. As he put aside the blade with his own he shouted with a loud voice : “ Colonna ! to the rescue, Colonna ! ”

Nor had it been without an ulterior object that the acute and self-controlling mind of Adrian had hitherto sought to prolong the parley. Even as he first addressed Orsini, he had perceived, by the moonlight, the glitter of armor upon two men advancing from the far end of the street, and judged at once, by the neighborhood, that they must be among the mercenaries of the Colonna.

Gently he suffered the form of Irene, which now — for she had swooned with the terror — pressed too heavily upon him, to slide from his left arm, and standing over her form while sheltered from behind by the wall which he had so warily gained, he contented himself with parrying the blows hastily aimed at him, without attempting to retaliate. Few of the Romans, however accustomed to such desultory warfare, were then well and dexterously practised in the use of arms ; and the science Adrian had acquired in the schools of the martial North befriended him now, even against such odds. It is

true, indeed, that the followers of Orsini did not share the fury of their lord; partly afraid of the consequences to themselves should the blood of so high-born a signor be split by their hands, partly embarrassed with the apprehension that they should see themselves suddenly beset with the ruthless hirelings so close within hearing, they struck but aimless and random blows, looking every moment behind and aside, and rather prepared for flight than slaughter. Echoing the cry of "Colonna," poor Benedetta fled at the first clash of swords. She ran down the dreary street still shrieking that cry, and passed the very portals of Stephen's palace (where some grim forms yet loitered) without arresting her steps there, so great were her confusion and terror.

Meanwhile the two armed men whom Adrian had descried, proceeded leisurely up the street. The one was of a rude and common mould; his arms and his complexion testified his calling and race, and by the great respect he paid to his companion, it was evident that that companion was no native of Italy. For the brigands of the North, while they served the vices of the Southern, scarce affected to disguise their contempt for his cowardice.

The companion of the brigand was a man of a martial, yet easy air. He wore no helmet, but a cap of crimson velvet, set off with a white plume; on his mantle, or surcoat, which was of scarlet, was wrought a broad white cross, both at back and breast; and so brilliant was the polish of his corselet that as from time to time the mantle waved aside and exposed it to the moonbeams, it glittered like light itself.

"Nay, Rodolf," said he, "if thou hast so good a lot of it here with that hoary schemer, Heaven forbid that I should wish to draw thee back again to our merry band. But tell me, this Rienzi, thinkest thou he has any solid and formidable power?"

"Pshaw! noble chieftain, not a whit of it. He pleases the mob; but as for the nobles, they laugh at him, and as for the soldiers, he has no money."

"He pleases the mob, then?"

"Ay, that doth he; and when he speaks aloud to them, all the roar of Rome is hushed."

"Humph! when nobles are hated and soldiers are bought, a mob may in any hour become the master. An honest people and a weak mob, a corrupt people and a strong mob," said the other, rather to himself than to his comrade, and scarce, perhaps, conscious of the eternal truth of his aphorism. "He is no mere brawler, this Rienzi, I suspect; I must see to it. Hark! what noise is that? By the Holy Sepulchre, it is the ring of our own metal!"

"And that cry, 'a Colonna!'" exclaimed Rodolf. "Pardon me, master; I must away to the rescue!"

"Ay, it is the duty of thy hire; run, — yet stay, I will accompany thee, gratis for once, and from pure passion for mischief. By this hand, there is no music like clashing steel!"

Still Adrian continued gallantly and unwounded to defend himself, though his arm now grew tired, his breath wellnigh spent, and his eyes began to wink and reel beneath the glare of the tossing torches. Orsini himself, exhausted by his fury, had paused for an instant, fronting his foe with a heaving breast and savage looks, when suddenly his followers exclaimed, "Fly! fly! the bandits approach; we are surrounded!" and two of the servitors, without further parley, took fairly to their heels. The other five remained irresolute, and waiting but the command of their master, when he of the white plume, whom I have just described, thrust himself into the *mêlée*.

"What! gentles," said he, "have ye finished already? Nay, let us not mar the sport; begin again, I beseech you. What are the odds? Ho! six to one! Nay, no wonder that ye have waited for fairer play. See, we two will take the weaker side. Now, then, let us begin again."

"Insolent!" cried the Orsini. "Knowest thou him whom thou addressest thus arrogantly? I am Martino di Porto. Who art thou?"

"Walter de Montreal, gentleman of Provence and Knight of St. John!" answered the other, carelessly.

At that redoubted name — the name of one of the boldest warriors and of the most accomplished freebooter of his time

— even Martino's cheek grew pale, and his followers uttered a cry of terror.

"And this my comrade," continued the Knight, "for we may as well complete the introduction, is probably better known to you than I am, gentles of Rome; and you doubtless recognize in him Rodolf of Saxony, a brave man and a true, where he is properly paid for his services."

"Signor," said Adrian to his enemy, who, aghast and dumb, remained staring vacantly at the two new-comers, "you are now in my power. See, our own people, too, are approaching."

And indeed from the palace of Stephen Colonna torches began to blaze, and armed men were seen rapidly advancing to the spot.

"Go home in peace; and if to-morrow, or any day more suitable to thee, thou wilt meet me alone and lance to lance, as is the wont of the knights of the Empire, or with band to band and man for man, as is rather the Roman custom, I will not fail thee: there is my gage."

"Nobly spoken," said Montreal; "and if ye choose the latter, by your leave, I will be one of the party."

Martino answered not. He took up the glove, thrust it in his bosom, and strode hastily away; only, when he had got some paces down the street, he turned back, and, shaking his clenched hand at Adrian, exclaimed, in a voice trembling with impotent rage, "Faithful to death!"

The words made one of the mottoes of the Orsini; and whatever its earlier signification, had long passed into a current proverb to signify their hatred to the Colonna.

Adrian, now engaged in raising and attempting to revive Irene, who was still insensible, disdainfully left it to Montreal to reply.

"I doubt not, Signor," said the latter, coolly, "that thou wilt be faithful to Death; for Death, God wot, is the only contract which men, however ingenious, are unable to break or evade."

"Pardon me, gentle Knight," said Adrian, looking up from his charge, "if I do not yet give myself wholly to gratitude. I have learned enough of knighthood to feel thou wilt acknowledge that my first duty is here —"

"Oh! a lady, then, was the cause of the quarrel? I need not ask who was in the right, when a man brings to the rivalry such odds as yon caitiff."

"Thou mistakest a little, Sir Knight; it is but a lamb I have rescued from the wolf."

"For thy own table! Be it so!" returned the Knight, gayly.

Adrian smiled gravely, and shook his head in denial. In truth, he was somewhat embarrassed by his situation. Though habitually gallant, he was not willing to expose to misconstruction the disinterestedness of his late conduct, and (for it was his policy to conciliate popularity) to sully the credit which his bravery would give him among the citizens by conveying Irene (whose beauty, too, as yet, he had scarcely noted) to his own dwelling; and yet, in her present situation, there was no alternative. She evinced no sign of life. He knew not her home, nor parentage. Benedetta had vanished. He could not leave her in the streets, he could not resign her to the care of another; and as she lay now upon his breast, he felt her already endeared to him by that sense of protection which is so grateful to the human heart. He briefly, therefore, explained to those now gathered round him his present situation and the cause of the past conflict, and bade the torch-bearers precede him to his home.

"You, Sir Knight," added he, turning to Montreal, "if not already more pleasantly lodged, will, I trust, deign to be my guest?"

"Thanks, Signor," answered Montreal, maliciously; "but I also, perhaps, have my own affairs to watch over. Adieu! I shall seek you at the earliest occasion. Fair night, and gentle dreams!

"Robers Bertrams qui estoit tors,
Mais à ceval estoit mult fors.
Cil avoit o lui grans effors;
Multi ot 'homes per lui mors.'" ¹

And muttering this rugged chant from the old "Roman de Rou," the Provençal, followed by Rodolf, pursued his way.

¹ "An ill-favored man, but a stout horseman, was Robert Bertram. Great deeds were his, and many a man died by his hand."

The vast extent of Rome and the thinness of its population left many of the streets utterly deserted. The principal nobles were thus enabled to possess themselves of a wide range of buildings, which they fortified, partly against each other, partly against the people; their numerous relatives and clients lived around them, forming, as it were, petty courts and cities in themselves.

Almost opposite to the principal palace of the Colonna (occupied by his powerful kinsman, Stephen) was the mansion of Adrian. Heavily swung back the massive gates at his approach; he ascended the broad staircase, and bore his charge into an apartment which his tastes had decorated in a fashion not as yet common in that age. Ancient statues and busts were arranged around; the pictured arras of Lombardy decorated the walls and covered the massive seats.

"What ho! Lights, here, and wine!" cried the Seneschal.

"Let us alone," said Adrian, gazing passionately on the pale cheek of Irene, as he now, by the clear light, beheld all its beauty; and a sweet yet burning hope crept into his heart.

CHAPTER V.

THE DESCRIPTION OF A CONSPIRATOR, AND THE DAWN OF THE CONSPIRACY.

ALONE, by a table covered with various papers, sat a man in the prime of life. The chamber was low and long; many antique and disfigured bas-reliefs and torsos were placed around the wall, interspersed, here and there, with the short sword and close casque, time-worn relics of the prowess of ancient Rome. Right above the table at which he sat, the moonlight streamed through a high and narrow casement, deep sunk in the massy wall. In a niche to the right of this window, guarded by a sliding door which was now partially drawn aside, but which, by its solid substance and the sheet of iron with which it was plated, testified how valuable, in the eyes of the owner, was

the treasure it protected, were ranged some thirty or forty volumes, then deemed no inconsiderable library, and being, for the most part, the laborious copies in manuscript by the hand of the owner, from immortal originals.

Leaning his cheek on his hand, his brow somewhat knit, his lip slightly compressed, that personage indulged in meditations far other than the indolent dreams of scholars. As the high and still moonlight shone upon his countenance, it gave an additional and solemn dignity to features which were naturally of a grave and majestic cast. Thick and auburn hair, the color of which, not common to the Romans, was ascribed to his descent from the Teuton Emperor, clustered in large curls above a high and expansive forehead; and even the present thoughtful compression of the brow could not mar the aspect of latent power which it derived from that great breadth between the eyes, in which the Grecian sculptors of old so admirably conveyed the expression of authority, and the silent energy of command. But his features were not cast in the Grecian, still less in the Teuton mould. The iron jaw, the aquiline nose, the somewhat sunken cheek, strikingly recalled the character of the hard Roman race, and might not inaptly have suggested to a painter a model for the younger Brutus.

The marked outline of the face, and the short, firm upper lip, were not concealed by the beard and mustaches usually then worn; and in the faded portrait of the person now described, still extant at Rome, may be traced a certain resemblance to the popular pictures of Napoleon, — not indeed in the features, which are more stern and prominent in the portrait of the Roman, but in that peculiar expression of concentrated and tranquil power which so nearly realizes the ideal of intellectual majesty. Though still young, the personal advantages most peculiar to youth, — the bloom and glow, the rounded cheek in which care had not yet ploughed its lines, the full, unsunken eye, and the slender delicacy of frame: these were not the characteristics of that solitary student. And though considered by his contemporaries as eminently handsome, the judgment was probably formed less from the more vulgar claims to such distinction than from the

height of the stature,—an advantage at that time more esteemed than at present,—and that nobler order of beauty which cultivated genius and commanding character usually stamp upon even homely features; the more rare in an age so rugged.

The character of Rienzi (for the youth presented to the reader in the first chapter of this history is now again before him in maturer years) had acquired greater hardness and energy with each stepping-stone to power. There was a circumstance attendant on his birth which had probably exercised great and early influence on his ambition. Though his parents were in humble circumstances and of lowly calling, his father was the natural son of the Emperor Henry VII.;¹ and it was the pride of the parents that probably gave to Rienzi the unwonted advantages of education. This pride transmitted to himself—his descent from royalty dinned into his ear, infused into his thoughts, from his cradle—made him, even in his earliest youth, deem himself the equal of the Roman signors, and half unconsciously aspire to be their superior. But as the literature of Rome was unfolded to his eager eye and ambitious heart, he became imbued with that pride of country which is nobler than the pride of birth; and, save when stung by allusions to his origin, he unaffectedly valued himself more on being a Roman plebeian than the descendant of a Teuton king. His brother's death and the vicissitudes he himself had already undergone, deepened the earnest and solemn qualities of his character; and at length all the faculties of a very uncommon intellect were concentrated into one object, which borrowed from a mind strongly and mystically religious, as well as patriotic, a sacred aspect, and grew at once a duty and a passion.

¹ De Sade supposes that the mother of Rienzi was the daughter of an illegitimate son of Henry VII., supporting his opinion from a MS. in the Vatican. But according to the contemporaneous biographer, Rienzi, in addressing Charles, king of Bohemia, claims the relationship from his father. "Di vostro legnaggio sono — figlio di bastardo d' Enrico imperatore," etc. A more recent writer, il Padre Gabrini, cites an inscription in support of this descent: "Nicolaus Tribunus . . . *Laurentii Teutonici Filius*," etc.

"Yes," said Rienzi, breaking suddenly from his reverie, "yes, the day is at hand when Rome shall rise again from her ashes; Justice shall dethrone Oppression; men shall walk safe in their ancient Forum. We will rouse from his forgotten tomb the indomitable soul of Cato! There shall be a *people* once more in Rome! And I—I shall be the instrument of that triumph, the restorer of my race! Mine shall be the first voice to swell the battle-cry of freedom; mine the first hand to rear her banner. Yes, from the height of my own soul, as from a mountain, I see already rising the liberties and the grandeur of the New Rome; and on the corner-stone of the mighty fabric posterity shall read my name."

Uttering these lofty boasts, the whole person of the speaker seemed instinct with his ambition. He strode the gloomy chamber with light and rapid steps, as if on air; his breast heaved, his eyes glowed. He felt that love itself can scarcely bestow a rapture equal to that which is felt, in his first virgin enthusiasm, by a patriot who knows himself *sincere*!

There was a slight knock at the door, and a servitor, in the rich liveries worn by the Pope's officials,¹ presented himself.

"Signor," said he, "my lord the Bishop of Orvieto, is without."

"Ha! that is fortunate. Lights there! My lord, this is an honor which I can estimate better than express."

"Tut, tut! my good friend," said the Bishop, entering, and seating himself familiarly, "no ceremonies between the servants of the Church; and never, I ween well, had she greater need of true friends than now. These unholy tumults, these licentious contentions, in the very shrines and city of Saint Peter, are sufficient to scandalize all Christendom."

"And so will it be," said Rienzi, "until his Holiness himself shall be graciously persuaded to fix his residence in the seat of his predecessors, and curb with a strong arm the excesses of the nobles."

"Alas! man," said the Bishop, "thou knowest that these words are but as wind; for were the Pope to fulfil thy wishes,

¹ Not the present hideous habiliments, which are said to have been the invention of Michael Angelo.

and remove from Avignon to Rome, by the blood of Saint Peter, he would not curb the nobles, but the nobles would curb him! Thou knowest well that until his blessed predecessor, of pious memory, conceived the wise design of escaping to Avignon, the Father of the Christian world was but like many other fathers in their old age, controlled and guarded by his rebellious children. Recollestest thou not how the noble Boniface himself, a man of great heart and nerves of iron, was kept in thralldom by the ancestors of the Orsini, his entrances and exits made but at their will, so that, like a caged eagle, he beat himself against his bars and died? Verily, thou talkest of the memories of Rome; these are not the memories that are very attractive to popes."

"Well," said Rienzi, laughing gently, and drawing his seat nearer to the Bishop's, "my lord has certainly the best of the argument at present; and I must own that strong, licentious, and unhallowed as the order of nobility was then, it is yet more so now."

"Even I," rejoined Raimond, coloring as he spoke, "though Vicar of the Pope, and representative of his spiritual authority, was, but three days ago, subjected to a coarse affront from that very Stephen Colonna who has ever received such favor and tenderness from the Holy See. His servitors jostled mine in the open streets, and I myself—I, the delegate of the sire of kings—was forced to draw aside to the wall, and wait until the hoary insolent swept by. Nor were blaspheming words wanting to complete the insult. 'Pardon, Lord Bishop,' said he, as he passed me, 'but this world, thou knowest, must necessarily take precedence of the other.'"

"Dared he so high?" said Rienzi, shading his face with his hand, as a very peculiar smile—scarcely itself joyous, though it made others gay, and which completely changed the character of his face, naturally grave even to sternness—played round his lips. "Then it is time for thee, holy father, as for us, to—"

"To what?" interrupted the Bishop, quickly. "Can we effect aught? Dismiss thy enthusiastic dreamings; descend to the real earth; look soberly round us. Against men so powerful, what *can* we do?"

"My lord," answered Rienzi, gravely, "it is the misfortune of signors of your rank never to know the people, or the accurate signs of the time. As those who pass over the heights of mountains see the clouds sweep below, veiling the plains and valleys from their gaze, while they only a little above the level survey the movements and the homes of men, —even so from your lofty eminence ye behold but the indistinct and sullen vapors; while from my humbler station I see the preparations of the shepherds to shelter themselves and herds from the storm which those clouds betoken. Despair not, my lord; endurance goes but to a certain limit, — to that limit it is already stretched: Rome waits but the occasion (it will soon come, but not suddenly) to rise simultaneously against her oppressors."

The great secret of eloquence is to be in earnest; the great secret of Rienzi's eloquence was in the mightiness of his enthusiasm. He never spoke as one who doubted of success. Perhaps, like most men who undertake high and great actions, he himself was never thoroughly aware of the obstacles in his way. He saw the end, bright and clear, and overleaped, in the vision of his soul, the crosses and the length of the path; thus the deep convictions of his own mind stamped themselves irresistibly upon others. He seemed less to promise than to prophesy.

The Bishop of Orvietto, not over wise, yet a man of cool temperament and much worldly experience, was forcibly impressed by the energy of his companion, —perhaps, indeed, the more so, inasmuch as his own pride and his own passions were also enlisted against the arrogance and license of the nobles. He paused ere he replied to Rienzi.

"But is it," he asked at length, "only the plebeians who will rise? Thou knowest how they are caitiff and uncertain."

"My lord," answered Rienzi, "judge, by one fact, how strongly I am surrounded by friends of no common class. Thou knowest how loudly I speak against the nobles. I cite them by their name; I beard the Savelli, the Orsini, the Colonna, in their very hearing. Thinkest thou that they forgive me? Thinkest thou that, were only the plebeians my

safeguard and my favorers, they would not seize me by open force, that I had not long ere this found a gag in their dungeons, or been swallowed up in the eternal dumbness of the grave? Observe," continued he, as, reading the Vicar's countenance, he perceived the impression he had made, "observe that, throughout the whole world, a great revolution has begun. The barbaric darkness of centuries has been broken; the KNOWLEDGE which made men as demigods in the past time has been called from her urn; a Power, subtler than brute force and mightier than armed men, is at work. We have begun once more to do homage to the Royalty of Mind. Yes, that same Power which, a few years ago, crowned Petrarch in the Capitol, when it witnessed, after the silence of twelve centuries, the glories of a TRIUMPH; which heaped upon a man of obscure birth, and unknown in arms, the same honors given of old to emperors and the vanquishers of kings; which united in one act of homage even the rival houses of Colonna and Orsini; which made the haughtiest patricians emulous to bear the train, to touch but the purple robe of the son of the Florentine plebeian; which still draws the eyes of Europe to the lowly cottage of Vacluse; which gives to the humble student the all-acknowledged license to admonish tyrants, and approach, with haughty prayers, even the Father of the Church! yes, that same Power, which, working silently throughout Italy, murmurs under the solid base of the Venetian oligarchy;¹ which, beyond the Alps, has wakened into visible and sudden life in Spain, in Germany, in Flanders; and which, even in that barbarous Isle, conquered by the Norman sword, ruled by the bravest of living kings,² has roused a spirit Norman cannot break—kings to rule over must rule by—yes, that same

¹ It was about eight years afterwards that the long-smothered hate of the Venetian people to that wisest and most vigilant of all oligarchies, the Sparta of Italy, broke out in the conspiracy under Marino Faliero.

² Edward III., in whose reign opinions far more popular than those of the following century began to work. The Civil Wars threw back the action into the blood. It was indeed an age throughout the world which put forth abundant blossoms, but crude and unripened fruit;—a singular leap, followed by as singular a pause.

Power is everywhere abroad: it speaks, it conquers in the voice even of him who is before you; it unites in his cause all on whom but one glimmering of light has burst, all in whom one generous desire can be kindled! Know, Lord Vicar, that there is not a man in Rome, save our oppressors themselves, — not a man who has learned one syllable of our ancient tongue, — whose heart and sword are not with me. The peaceful cultivators of letters, the proud nobles of the second order, the rising race, wiser than their slothful sires; above all, my lord, the humbler ministers of religion, priests and monks, whom luxury hath not blinded, pomp hath not deafened, to the monstrous outrage to Christianity daily and nightly perpetrated in the Christian Capital, — these, all these, are linked with the merchant and the artisan in one indissoluble bond, waiting but the signal to fall or to conquer, to live freemen or to die martyrs, with Rienzi and their country!"

"Sayest thou so in truth?" said the Bishop, startled, and half rising. "Prove but thy words, and thou shalt not find the ministers of God are less eager than their lay brethren for the happiness of men."

"What I say," rejoined Rienzi, in a cooler tone, "that can I show! But I may only prove it to those who will be with us."

"Fear me not," answered Raimond, "I know well the secret mind of his Holiness, whose delegate and representative I am; and could he see but the legitimate and natural limit set to the power of the patricians, who in their arrogance have set at nought the authority of the Church itself, be sure that he would smile on the hand that drew the line. Nay, so certain of this am I, that if ye succeed, I, his responsible but unworthy vicar, will myself sanction the success. But beware of crude attempts; the Church must not be weakened by linking itself to failure."

"Right, my lord," answered Rienzi; "and in this, the policy of religion, is that of freedom. Judge of my prudence by my long delay. He who can see all around him impatient — himself not less so — and yet suppress the signal and bide the hour, is not likely to lose his cause by rashness."

"More, then, of this anon," said the Bishop, resettling him-

self in his seat. "As thy plans mature, fear not to communicate with me. Believe that Rome has no firmer friend than he who, ordained to preserve order, finds himself impotent against aggression. Meanwhile, to the object of my present visit, which links itself in some measure, perhaps, with the topics on which we have conversed. . . . Thou knowest that when his Holiness intrusted thee with thy present office, he bade thee also announce his beneficent intention of granting a general Jubilee at Rome for the year 1350, — a most admirable design for two reasons sufficiently apparent to thyself: first, that every Christian soul that may undertake the pilgrimage to Rome on that occasion, may thus obtain a general remission of sins; and secondly, because, to speak carnally, the concourse of pilgrims so assembled usually, by the donations and offerings their piety suggests, very materially add to the revenues of the Holy See, — at this time, by the way, in no very flourishing condition. This thou knowest, dear Rienzi."

Rienzi bowed his head in assent, and the prelate continued:

"Well, it is with the greatest grief that his Holiness perceives that his pious intentions are likely to be frustrated; for so fierce and numerous are now the brigands in the public approaches to Rome that, verily, the boldest pilgrim may tremble a little to undertake the journey, and those who do so venture will, probably, be composed of the poorest of the Christian community, men who, bringing with them neither gold, nor silver, nor precious offerings, will have little to fear from the rapacity of the brigands. Hence arise two consequences: on the one hand, the rich — who, Heaven knows, and the Gospel has, indeed, expressly declared, have the most need of a remission of sins — will be deprived of this glorious occasion for absolution; and, on the other hand, the coffers of the Church will be impiously defrauded of that wealth which it would otherwise doubtless obtain from the zeal of her children."

"Nothing can be more logically manifest, my lord," said Rienzi.

The Vicar continued: "Now, in letters received five days since from his Holiness, he bade me expose these fearful con-

sequences to Christianity to the various patricians who are legitimately fiefs of the Church, and command their resolute combination against the marauders of the road. With these have I conferred, and vainly."

"For by the aid, and from the troops, of those very brigands, these patricians have fortified their palaces against each other," added Rienzi.

"Exactly for that reason," rejoined the Bishop. "Nay, Stephen Colonna himself had the audacity to confess it. Utterly unmoved by the loss to so many precious souls, and, I may add, to the papal treasury, which ought to be little less dear to right-discerning men, they refuse to advance a step against the bandits. Now, then, hearken to the second mandate of his Holiness:—'Failing the nobles,' saith he, in his prophetic sagacity, 'confer with Cola di Rienzi. He is a bold man and a pious, and, thou tellest me, of great weight with the people; and say to him that if his wit can devise the method for extirpating these sons of Belial and rendering a safe passage along the public ways, largely, indeed, will he merit at our hands, lasting will be the gratitude we shall owe to him; and whatever succor thou, and the servants of our See, can render to him, let it not be stinted.'"

"Said his Holiness thus?" exclaimed Rienzi. "I ask no more. The gratitude is mine that he hath thought thus of his servant, and intrusted me with this charge; at once I accept it, at once I pledge myself to success. Let us, my lord, let us, then, clearly understand the limits ordained to my discretion. To curb the brigands without the walls, I must have authority over those within. If I undertake, at peril of my life, to clear all the avenues to Rome of the robbers who now infest it, shall I have full license for conduct bold, peremptory, and severe?"

"Such conduct the very nature of the charge demands," replied Raimond.

"Ay, even though it be exercised against the arch offenders, against the supporters of the brigands, against the haughtiest of the nobles themselves?"

The Bishop paused, and looked hard in the face of the

speaker. "I repeat," said he at length, sinking his voice, and with a significant tone, "in these bold attempts success is the sole sanction. *Succeed*, and we will excuse thee all, even to the —"

"Death of a Colonna or an Orsini, should justice demand it, and provided it be according to the law, and only incurred by the violation of the law?" added Rienzi, firmly.

The Bishop did not reply in words, but a slight motion of his head was sufficient answer to Rienzi.

"My lord," said he, "from this time, then, all is well. I date the revolution, the restoration of order of the state, from this hour, this very conference. Till now, knowing that justice must never wink upon great offenders, I had hesitated, through fear lest thou and his Holiness might deem it severity, and blame him who replaces the law because he smites the violators of law. Now I judge ye more rightly. Your hand, my lord."

The Bishop extended his hand; Rienzi grasped it firmly, and then raised it respectfully to his lips. Both felt that the compact was sealed.

This conference, so long in recital, was short in the reality; but its object was already finished, and the Bishop rose to depart. The outer portal of the house was opened, the numerous servitors of the Bishop held on high their torches, and he had just turned from Rienzi, who had attended him to the gate, when a female passed hastily through the Prelate's train, and starting as she beheld Rienzi, flung herself at his feet.

"Oh, hasten, sir, hasten; for the love of God, hasten, or the young Signora is lost forever!"

"The Signora! Heaven and earth, Benedetta, of whom do you speak? Of my sister, of Irene? Is she not within?"

"Oh, sir, the Orsini, the Orsini!"

"What of them? Speak, woman!"

Here, breathlessly, and with many a break, Benedetta recounted to Rienzi, in whom the reader has already recognized the brother of Irene, so far of the adventure with Martino di Porto as she had witnessed; of the termination and result of the contest she knew nought.

Rienzi listened in silence; but the deadly paleness of his countenance and the writhing of the nether lip testified the emotions to which he gave no audible vent.

"You hear, my Lord Bishop, you hear," said he, when Benedetta had concluded; and turning to the Bishop, whose departure the narrative had delayed, "you hear to what outrage the citizens of Rome are subjected. My hat and sword instantly! My lord, forgive my abruptness."

"Whither art thou bent, then?" asked Raimond.

"Whither, whither? Ay, I forgot, my lord, you have no sister. Perhaps, too, you had no brother? No, no; one victim at least I will live to save. Whither, you ask me? To the palace of Martino di Porto."

"To an Orsini *alone*, and for justice?"

"Alone, and for *justice*? No!" shouted Rienzi, in a loud voice, as he seized his sword, now brought to him by one of his servants, and rushed from the house; "but one man is sufficient for *revenge*!"

The Bishop paused for a moment's deliberation. "He must not be lost," muttered he, "as he well may be, if exposed thus solitary to the wolf's rage. What, ho!" he cried aloud, "advance the torches! Quick, quick! We ourself, we, the Vicar of the Pope, will see to this. Calm yourselves, good people; your young Signora shall be restored. On, to the palace of Martino di Porto!"

CHAPTER VI.

IRENE IN THE PALACE OF ADRIAN DI CASTELLO.

As the Cyprian gazed on the image in which he had embodied a youth of dreams, what time the living hues flushed slowly beneath the marble, so gazed the young and passionate Adrian upon the form reclined before him, re-awakening gradually to life. And if the beauty of that face were not of the loftiest or the most dazzling order, if its soft and quiet character might be outshone by many of loveliness less really perfect, yet

never was there a countenance that, to some eyes, would have seemed more charming, and never one in which more eloquently was wrought that ineffable and virgin expression which Italian art seeks for in its models, in which modesty is the outward, and tenderness the latent, expression, — the bloom of youth, both of form and heart, ere the first frail and delicate freshness of either is brushed away; and when even love itself, the only unquiet visitant that should be known at such an age, is but a sentiment, and not a passion!

"Benedetta!" murmured Irene, at length opening her eyes, unconsciously, upon him who knelt beside her, — eyes of that uncertain, that most liquid hue, on which you might gaze for years and never learn the secret of the color, so changed it with the dilating pupil, darkening in the shade, and brightening into azure in the light.

"Benedetta," said Irene, "where art thou? Oh, Benedetta! I have had such a dream."

"And I too, such a vision!" thought Adrian.

"Where am I?" cried Irene, rising from the couch. "This room, these hangings — Holy Virgin! do I dream still? And you! Heavens! — it is the Lord Adrian di Castello!"

"Is that a name thou hast been taught to fear?" said Adrian. "If so, I will forswear it."

If Irene now blushed deeply, it was not in that wild delight with which her romantic heart might have foretold that she would listen to the first words of homage from Adrian di Castello. Bewildered and confused, terrified at the strangeness of the place, and shrinking even from the thought of finding herself alone with one who for years had been present to her fancies, — alarm and distress were the emotions she felt the most, and which most were impressed upon her speaking countenance; and as Adrian now drew nearer to her, despite the gentleness of his voice and the respect of his looks, her fears, not the less strong that they were vague, increased upon her. She retreated to the farther end of the room, looked wildly round her, and then, covering her face with her hands, burst into a paroxysm of tears.

Moved himself by these tears, and divining her thoughts,

Adrian forgot for a moment all the more daring wishes he had formed.

"Fear not, sweet lady," said he, earnestly. "Recollect thyself, I beseech thee; no peril, no evil can reach thee here. It was this hand that saved thee from the outrage of the Orsini; this roof is but the shelter of a friend! Tell me, then, fair wonder, thy name and residence, and I will summon my servants and guard thee to thy home at once."

Perhaps the relief of tears, even more than Adrian's words, restored Irene to herself and enabled her to comprehend her novel situation; and as her senses, thus cleared, told her what she owed to him whom her dreams had so long imaged as the ideal of all excellence, she recovered her self-possession, and uttered her thanks with a grace not the less winning, if it still partook of embarrassment.

"Thank me not," answered Adrian, passionately. "I have touched thy hand, — I am repaid. Repaid! nay, all gratitude, all homage is for me to render!"

Blushing again, but with far different emotions than before, Irene, after a momentary pause, replied, "Yet, my lord, I must consider it a debt the more weighty that you speak of it so lightly. And now complete the obligation. I do not see my companion, — suffer her to accompany me home; it is but a short way hence."

"Blessed, then, is the air that I have breathed so unconsciously!" said Adrian. "But thy companion, dear lady, is not here. She fled, I imagine, in the confusion of the conflict; and not knowing thy name, nor being able, in thy then state, to learn it from thy lips, it was my happy necessity to convey thee hither. But I will be thy companion. Nay, why that timid glance? My people also shall attend us."

"My thanks, noble lord, are of little worth; my brother, who is not unknown to thee, will thank thee more fittingly. May I depart?" and Irene, as she spoke, was already at the door.

"Art thou so eager to leave me?" answered Adrian, sadly. "Alas! when thou hast departed from my eyes, it will seem as if the moon had left the night! But it is happiness to obey thy wishes, even though they tear thee from me."

A slight smile parted Irene's lips, and Adrian's heart beat audibly to himself as he drew from that smile and those down-cast eyes no unfavorable omen.

Reluctantly and slowly he turned towards the door and summoned his attendants. "But," said he, as they stood on the lofty staircase, "thou sayest, sweet lady, that thy brother's name is not unknown to me. Heaven grant that he be, indeed, a friend of the Colonna!"

"His boast," answered Irene, evasively, "the boast of Cola di Rienzi, is to be a friend to the friends of Rome."

"Holy Virgin of Ara Coeli! is thy brother that extraordinary man?" exclaimed Adrian, as he foresaw, at the mention of that name, a barrier to his sudden passion. "Alas! in a Colonna, in a noble, he will see no merit, even though thy fortunate deliverer, sweet maiden, sought to be his early friend!"

"Thou wrongest him much, my lord," returned Irene, warmly; "he is a man above all others to sympathize with thy generous valor, even had it been exerted in defence of the humblest woman in Rome: how much more, then, when in protection of his sister!"

"The times are indeed diseased," answered Adrian, thoughtfully, as they now found themselves in the open street, "when men who alike mourn for the woes of their country are yet suspicious of each other; when to be a patrician is to be regarded as an enemy to the people; when to be termed the friend of the people is to be considered a foe to the patricians! But come what may, oh! let me hope, dear lady, that no doubts, no divisions, shall banish from *thy* breast one gentle memory of me!"

"Ah! little, little do you know me —" began Irene, and stopped suddenly short.

"Speak! speak again! Of what music has this envious silence deprived my soul! Thou wilt not, then, forget me? And," continued Adrian, "we shall meet again? It is to Rienzi's house we are bound now; to-morrow I shall visit my old companion, — to-morrow I shall see thee. Will it not be so?"

In Irene's silence was her answer.

"And as thou hast told me thy brother's name, make it sweet to my ear, and add to it thine own."

"They call me Irene."

"Irene, Irene! Let me repeat it. It is a soft name, and dwells upon the lips as if loth to leave them, — a fitting name for one like thee."

Thus making his welcome court to Irene in that flowered and glowing language which, if more peculiar to that age and to the gallantry of the South, is also the language in which the poetry of youthful passion would, in all times and lands, utter its rich extravagance, could heart speak to heart, Adrian conveyed homeward his beautiful charge, taking, however, the most circuitous and lengthened route, — an artifice which Irene either perceived not, or silently forgave. They were now within sight of the street in which Rienzi dwelt, when a party of men, bearing torches, came unexpectedly upon them. It was a train of the Bishop of Orvietto, returning from the palace of Martino di Porto, and in their way (accompanied by Rienzi) to that of Adrian. They had learned at the former, without an interview with the Orsini, from the retainers in the court below, the fortune of the conflict and the name of Irene's champion; and despite Adrian's general reputation for gallantry, Rienzi knew enough of his character and the nobleness of his temper to feel assured that Irene was safe in his protection. Alas! in that very safety to the person is often the most danger to the heart. Woman never so dangerously loves as when he who loves her, for her sake subdues himself.

Clasped to her brother's breast, Irene bade him thank her deliverer; and Rienzi, with that fascinating frankness which sits so well on those usually reserved, and which all who would rule the hearts of their fellow-men must at times command, advanced to the young Colonna and poured forth his gratitude and praise.

"We have been severed too long; we must know each other again," replied Adrian. "I shall seek thee ere long, be assured."

Turning to take his leave of Irene, he conveyed her hand to his lips; and pressing it, as it dropped from his clasp, was he deceived in thinking that those delicate fingers lightly, involuntarily, returned the pressure?

CHAPTER VII.

UPON LOVE AND LOVERS.

If in adopting the legendary love-tale of Romeo and Juliet, Shakspeare had changed the scene in which it is cast for a more northern clime, we may doubt whether the art of Shakspeare himself could have reconciled us at once to the suddenness and the strength of Juliet's passion. And even as it is, perhaps there are few of our rational and sober-minded islanders who would not honestly confess, if fairly questioned, that they deem the romance and fervor of those ill-starred lovers of Verona exaggerated and overdrawn. Yet in Italy the picture of that affection born of a night, but "strong as death," is one to which the veriest commonplaces of life would afford parallels without number. As in different ages, so in different climes, love varies wonderfully in the shapes it takes. And even at this day, beneath Italian skies, many a simple girl would feel as Juliet, and many a homely gallant would rival the extravagance of Romeo. Long suits in that sunny land, wherein, as whereof, I now write, are unknown. In no other land, perhaps, is there found so commonly the love at first sight which in France is a jest, and in England a doubt; in no other land, too, is love, though so suddenly conceived, more faithfully preserved. That which is ripened in fancy comes at once to passion, yet is embalmed through all time by sentiment. And this must be my and their excuse if the love of Adrian seemed too prematurely formed, and that of Irene too romantically conceived; it is the excuse which they take from the air and sun, from the customs of their ancestors, from the

soft contagion of example. But while they yielded to the dictates of their hearts, it was with a certain though secret sadness, — a presentiment that had, perhaps, its charm, though it was of cross and evil. Born of so proud a race, Adrian could scarcely dream of marriage with the sister of a plebeian; and Irene, unconscious of the future glory of her brother, could hardly have cherished any hope save that of being loved. Yet these adverse circumstances, which in the harder, the more prudent, the more self-denying, perhaps the more virtuous minds that are formed beneath the northern skies, would have been an inducement to wrestle against love so placed, only contributed to feed and strengthen *theirs* by an opposition which has ever its attraction for romance. They found frequent, though short, opportunities of meeting, — not quite alone, but only in the conniving presence of Benedetta: sometimes in the public gardens, sometimes amidst the vast and deserted ruins by which the house of Rienzi was surrounded. They surrendered themselves, without much question of the future, to the excitement, the elysium, of the hour; they lived but from day to day; *their* future was the next time they should meet: beyond that epoch, the very mists of their youthful love closed in obscurity and shadow which they sought not to penetrate; and as yet they had not arrived at that period of affection when there was danger of their fall, — their love had not passed the golden portal where Heaven ceases and Earth begins. Everything for them was the poetry, the vagueness, the refinement, — not the power, the concentration, the mortality, — of desire! The look, the whisper, the brief pressure of the hand, at most, the first kisses of love, rare and few, — these marked the human limits of that sentiment which filled them with a new life, which elevated them as with a new soul.

The roving tendencies of Adrian were at once fixed and centred; the dreams of his tender mistress had awakened to a life dreaming still, but "rounded with a *truth*." All that earnestness and energy and fervor of emotion which in her brother broke forth in the schemes of patriotism and the aspirations of power, were in Irene softened down into one object of existence, one concentration of soul, — and that was

love. Yet in this range of thought and action, so apparently limited, there was in reality no less boundless a sphere than in the wide space of her brother's many-pathed ambition. Not the less had she the power and scope for all the loftiest capacities granted to our clay. Equal was her enthusiasm for her idol; equal, had she been equally tried, would have been her generosity, her devotion, — greater, be sure, her courage; more inalienable her worship; more unsullied by selfish purposes and sordid views. Time, change, misfortune, ingratitude, would have left *her* the same. What state could fall, what liberty decay, if the zeal of man's noisy patriotism were as pure as the silent loyalty of a woman's love?

In them everything *was young*, the heart unchilled, unblighted, that fulness and luxuriance of life's life which has in it something of divine. At that age, when it seems as if we could never die, how deathless, how flushed and mighty as with the youngness of a god, is all that our hearts create! Our own youth is like that of the earth itself when it peopled the woods and waters with divinities; when life ran riot, and yet only gave birth to beauty, — all its shapes, of poetry; all its airs, the melodies of Arcady and Olympus! The Golden Age never leaves the world; it exists still and shall exist, till love, health, poetry, are no more, — but only for the young!

If I now dwell, though but for a moment, on the interlude in a drama calling forth more masculine passions than that of love, it is because I foresee that the occasion will but rarely recur. If I linger on the description of Irene and her hidden affection, rather than wait for circumstances to portray them better than the author's words can, it is because I foresee that that loving and lovely image must continue to the last rather a shadow than a portrait, — thrown in the background, as is the real destiny of such natures, by bolder figures and more gorgeous colors; a something whose presence is rather felt than seen, and whose very harmony with the whole consists in its retiring and subdued repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENTHUSIASTIC MAN JUDGED BY THE DISCREET MAN.

"THOU wrongest me," said Rienzi, warmly, to Adrian, as they sat alone, towards the close of a long conference. "I do not play the part of a mere demagogue; I wish not to stir the great deeps in order that my lees of fortune may rise to the surface. So long have I brooded over the past that it seems to me as if I had become a part of it, as if I had no separate existence. I have coined my whole soul into one master-passion; and its end is the restoration of Rome."

"But by what means?"

"My lord! my lord! there is but one way to restore the greatness of a people,—it is an appeal to the people themselves. It is not in the power of princes and barons to make a state permanently glorious; they raise themselves, but they raise not the people with them. All great regenerations are the universal movement of the mass."

"Nay," answered Adrian, "then have we read history differently. To me, all great regenerations seem to have been the work of the few, and tacitly accepted by the multitude. But let us not dispute after the manner of the schools. Thou sayest loudly that a vast crisis is at hand, that the Good Estate (*buono stato*) shall be established. How? where are your arms, your soldiers? Are the nobles less strong than heretofore; is the mob more bold, more constant? Heaven knows that I speak not with the prejudices of my order; I weep for the debasement of my country! I am a Roman, and in that name I forget that I am a noble. But I tremble at the storm you would raise so hazardously. If your insurrection succeed, it will be violent; it will be purchased by blood,—by the blood of all the loftiest names of Rome. You will aim at a second expulsion of the Tarquins; but it will be more like a second proscription of Sylla. Massacres and disorders never

pave the way to peace. If, on the other hand, you fail, the chains of Rome are riveted forever; an ineffectual struggle to escape is but an excuse for additional tortures to the slave."

"And what, then, would the Lord Adrian have us do?" said Rienzi, with that peculiar and sarcastic smile which has before been noted. "Shall we wait till the Colonna and Orsini quarrel no more? Shall we ask the Colonna for liberty, and the Orsini for justice? My lord, we cannot appeal to the nobles against the nobles. We must not ask them to moderate their power, we must restore to ourselves that power. There may be danger in the attempt, but we attempt it amongst the monuments of the Forum; and if we fall, we shall perish worthy of our sires! Ye have high descent and sounding titles and wide lands, and you talk of *your* ancestral honors! We, too, we plebeians of Rome, we have *ours*! Our fathers were freemen! Where is our heritage? Not sold, not given away, but stolen from us, now by fraud, now by force; filched from us in our sleep, or wrung from us with fierce hands, amidst our cries and struggles. My lord, we but ask that lawful heritage to be restored to us, — to us, nay, to you it is the same; your liberty alike is gone. Can you dwell in your father's house without towers and fortresses and the bought swords of bravos? Can you walk in the streets at dark without arms and followers? True, *you*, a noble, may retaliate; though *we* dare not. You, in your turn, may terrify and outrage others; but does license compensate for liberty? They have given you pomp and power; but the safety of equal laws were a better gift. Oh, were I you, were I Stephen Colonna himself, I should pant, ay, thirstily as I do now, for that free air which comes not through bars and bulwarks against my fellow-citizens, but in the open space of Heaven, — safe, because protected by the silent Providence of Law, and not by the lean fears and hollow-eyed suspicions which are the comrades of a hated power. The tyrant thinks he is free because he commands slaves: the meanest peasant in a free state is more free than he is. Oh, my lord, that you, the brave, the generous, the enlightened, you, almost alone amidst your order, in the knowledge that we *had* a country, — oh, would that you,

who can sympathize with our sufferings, would strike with us for their redress !”

“Thou wilt war against Stephen Colonna, my kinsman ; and though I have seen him but little, nor, truth to say, esteem him much, yet he is the boast of our house : how can I join thee ?”

“His life will be safe, his possessions safe, his rank safe. What do we war against ? His power to do wrong to others !”

“Should he discover that thou hast force beyond words, he would be less merciful to *thee*.”

“And has he not discovered that ? Do not the shouts of the people tell him that I am a man whom he should fear ? Does he, the cautious, the wily, the profound, does he build fortresses and erect towers, and not see from his battlements the mighty fabric that I too have erected ?”

“You ! where, Rienzi ?”

“In the hearts of Rome ! Does he not see ?” continued Rienzi. “No, no ; he — all, all his tribe are blind. Is it not so ?”

“Of a certainty, my kinsman has no belief in your power, else he would have crushed you long ere this. Nay, it was but three days ago that he said, gravely, he would rather *you* addressed the populace than the best priest in Christendom ; for that other orators inflamed the crowd, and no man so stilled and dispersed them as you did.”

“And I called *him* profound ! Does not Heaven hush the air most when most it prepares the storm ? Ay, my lord, I understand. Stephen Colonna despises me. I have been,” here, as he continued, a deep blush mantled over his cheek — “you remember it — at his palace in my younger days, and pleased him with witty tales and light apophthegms. Nay — ha ! ha ! — he would call me, I think, sometimes, in gay compliment, his jester, his buffoon ! I have brooked his insult ; I have even bowed to his applause. I would undergo the same penance, stoop to the same shame, for the same motive and in the same cause. What did I desire to effect ? Can you tell me ? No ! I will whisper it, then, to you : it was —

the contempt of Stephen Colonna. Under that contempt I was protected till protection became no longer necessary. I desired not to be thought formidable by the patricians, in order that, quietly and unsuspected, I might make my way amongst the people. I have done so; I now throw aside the mask. Face to face with Stephen Colonna, I could tell him, this very hour, that I brave his anger; that I laugh at his dungeons and armed men. But if he think me the same Rienzi as of old, let him; I can wait my hour."

"Yet," said Adrian, waiving an answer to the haughty language of his companion, "tell me, what dost thou ask for the people, in order to avoid an appeal to their passions? Ignorant and capricious as they are, thou canst not appeal to their reason."

"I ask full justice and safety for all men. I will be contented with no less a compromise. I ask the nobles to dismantle their fortresses, to disband their armed retainers, to acknowledge no impunity for crime in high lineage, to claim no protection save in the courts of the common law."

"Vain desire!" said Adrian. "Ask what may yet be granted."

"Ha, ha!" replied Rienzi, laughing bitterly, "did I not tell you it was a vain dream to ask for law and justice at the hands of the great? Can you blame me, then, that I ask it elsewhere?" Then, suddenly changing his tone and manner, he added with great solemnity — "Waking life hath false and vain dreams; but sleep is sometimes a mighty prophet. By sleep it is that Heaven mysteriously communes with its creatures, and guides and sustains its earthly agents in the path to which its providence leads them on."

Adrian made no reply. This was not the first time he had noted that Rienzi's strong intellect was strangely conjoined with a deep and mystical superstition. And this yet more inclined the young noble, who, though sufficiently devout, yielded but little to the wilder credulities of the time, to doubt the success of the schemer's projects. In this he erred greatly, though his error was that of the worldly wise. For nothing ever so inspires human daring as the fond belief that it is the agent of a

Diviner Wisdom. Revenge and patriotism, united in one man of genius and ambition, — such are the Archimedean levers that find, in *FANATICISM*, the spot *out* of the world by which to move the world. The prudent man may direct a state, but it is the enthusiast who regenerates it — or ruins.

CHAPTER IX.

“WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THIS PICTURE, EVERY ONE
MARVELLED.”

BEFORE the market-place and at the foot of the Capitol, an immense crowd was assembled. Each man sought to push before his neighbor; each struggled to gain access to one particular spot, round which the crowd was wedged thick and dense.

“Corpo di Dio!” said a man of huge stature, pressing onward like some bulky ship, casting the noisy waves right and left from its prow, “this is hot work; but for what, in the Holy Mother’s name, do ye crowd so? See you not, Sir Ribald, that my right arm is disabled, swathed, and bandaged, so that I cannot help myself better than a baby? And yet you push against me as if I were an old wall!”

“Ah, Cecco del Vecchio! What, man! we must make way for you; you are too small and tender to bustle through a crowd! Come, I will protect you!” said a dwarf of some four feet high, glancing up at the giant.

“Faith,” said the grim smith, looking round on the mob, who laughed loud at the dwarf’s proffer, “we all do want protection, big and small. What do you laugh for, ye apes? Ay, you don’t understand parables.”

“And yet it is a parable we are come to gaze upon,” said one of the mob, with a slight sneer.

“Pleasant day to you, Signor Baroncelli,” answered Cecco del Vecchio; “you are a good man, and love the people: it

makes one's heart smile to see you. What's all this pother for?"

"Why, the Pope's notary hath set up a great picture in the market-place, and the gapers say it relates to Rome; so they are melting their brains out, this hot day, to guess at the riddle."

"Ho! ho!" said the smith, pushing on so vigorously that he left the speaker suddenly in the rear; "if Cola di Rienzi hath aught in the matter, I would break through stone rocks to get to it."

"Much good will a dead daub do us," said Baroncelli, sourly, and turning to his neighbors; but no man listened to him, and he, a would-be demagogue, gnawed his lip in envy.

Amidst half-awed groans and curses from the men whom he jostled aside, and open objurgations and shrill cries from the women, to whose robes and head-gear he showed as little respect, the sturdy smith won his way to a space fenced round by chains, in the centre of which was placed a huge picture.

"How came it hither?" cried one; "I was first at the market."

"We found it here at daybreak," said a vender of fruit; "no one was by."

"But why do you fancy Rienzi had a hand in it?"

"Why, who else could?" answered twenty voices.

"True! Who else?" echoed the gaunt smith. "I dare be sworn the good man spent the whole night in painting it himself. Blood of Saint Peter, but it is mighty fine! What is it about?"

"That's the riddle," said a meditative fishwoman; "if I could make it out, I should die happy."

"It is something about liberty and taxes, no doubt," said Luigi the butcher, leaning over the chains. "Ah! if Rienzi were minded, every poor man would have his bit of meat in his pot."

"And as much bread as he could eat," added a pale baker.

"Chut! bread and meat,—everybody has that now; but what wine the poor folks drink! One has no encouragement to take pains with one's vineyard," said a vinedresser.

"Ho, hollo! Long life to Pandulfo di Guido! Make way for master Pandulfo; he is a learned man; he is a friend of the great notary; he will tell us all about the picture. Make way, there, make way!"

Slowly and modestly, Pandulfo di Guido, a quiet, wealthy, and honest man of letters, whom nought save the violence of the times could have roused from his tranquil home or his studious closet, passed to the chains. He looked long and hard at the picture, which was bright with new and yet moist colors, and exhibited somewhat of the reviving art, which, though hard and harsh in its features, was about that time visible, and, carried to a far higher degree, we yet gaze upon in the paintings of Perugino, who flourished during the succeeding generation. The people pressed round the learned man with open mouths, now turning their eyes to the picture, now to Pandulfo.

"Know you not," at length said Pandulfo, "the easy and palpable meaning of this design? Behold how the painter has presented to you a vast and stormy sea; mark how its waves —"

"Speak louder, louder!" shouted the impatient crowd.

"Hush!" cried those in the immediate vicinity of Pandulfo; "the worthy Signor is perfectly audible."

Meanwhile, some of the more witty, pushing towards a stall in the market-place, bore from it a rough table, from which they besought Pandulfo to address the people. The pale citizen, with some pain and shame, for he was no practised spokesman, was obliged to assent; but when he cast his eyes over the vast and breathless crowd, his own deep sympathy with their cause inspired and emboldened him. A light broke from his eyes, his voice swelled into power, and his head, usually buried in his breast, became erect and commanding in its air.

"You see before you in the picture," he began again, "a mighty and tempestuous sea; upon its waves you behold five ships: four of them are already wrecks, — their masts are broken, the waves are dashing through the rent planks, they are past all aid and hope; on each of these ships lies the

corpse of a woman. See you not, in the wan face and livid limbs, how faithfully the limner hath painted the hues and loathsomeness of death? Below each of these ships is a word that applies the metaphor to truth. Yonder you see the name of Carthage; the other three are Troy, Jerusalem, and Babylon. To these four is one common inscription: 'To exhaustion were we brought by injustice!' Turn now your eyes to the middle of the sea, — there you behold the fifth ship, tossed amidst the waves, her mast broken, her rudder gone, her sails shivered, but not yet a wreck like the rest, though she soon may be. On her deck kneels a female clothed in mourning, — mark the woe upon her countenance; how cunningly the artist has conveyed its depth and desolation! She stretches out her arms in prayer, she implores your and Heaven's assistance. Mark now the superscription: 'This is Rome!' Yes, it is your country that addresses you in this emblem!"

The crowd waved to and fro, and a deep murmur crept gathering over the silence which they had hitherto kept.

"Now," continued Pandulfo, "turn your gaze to the right of the picture, and you will behold the cause of the tempest, you will see why the fifth vessel is thus perilled, and her sisters are thus wrecked. Mark, four different kinds of animals, who from their horrid jaws send forth the winds and storms which torture and rack the sea. The first are the lions, the wolves, the bears, — these, the inscription tells you, are the lawless and savage signors of the state. The next are the dogs and swine, — these are the evil counsellors and parasites. Thirdly, you behold the dragons and the foxes, — and these are false judges and notaries, and they who sell justice. Fourthly, in the hares, the goats, the apes, that assist in creating the storm, you perceive, by the inscription, the emblems of the popular thieves and homicides, ravishers and spoliators. Are ye bewildered still, O Romans, or have ye mastered the riddle of the picture?"

Far in their massive palaces the Savelli and Orsini heard the echo of the shouts that answered the question of Pandulfo.

"Are ye, then, without hope?" resumed the scholar, as the shout ceased, and hushing, with the first sound of his voice,

the ejaculations and speeches which each man had turned to utter to his neighbor. "Are ye without hope? Doth the picture, which shows your tribulation, promise you no redemption? Behold, above that angry sea the heavens open, and the majesty of God descends gloriously, as to judgment; and from the rays that surround the Spirit of God extend two flaming swords, and on those swords stand, in wrath, but in deliverance, the two patron saints,—the two mighty guardians of your city! People of Rome, farewell; the parable is finished!"¹

CHAPTER X.

A ROUGH SPIRIT RAISED, WHICH MAY HEREAFTER REND THE WIZARD.

WHILE thus animated was the scene around the Capitol, *within* one of the apartments of the palace sat the agent and prime cause of that excitement. In the company of his quiet scribes, Rienzi appeared absorbed in the patient details of his avocation. While the murmur and the hum, the shout and the tramp, of multitudes, rolled to his chamber, he seemed not to heed them, nor to rouse himself a moment from his task. With the unbroken regularity of an automaton, he continued to enter in his large book, and with the clear and beautiful characters of the period, those damning figures which taught him, better than declamations, the frauds practised on the people, and armed him with that weapon of plain fact which it is so difficult for abuse to parry.

"Page 2, Vol. B.," said he, in the tranquil voice of business, to the clerks, "see there the profits of the salt duty; depart-

¹ M. Sismondi attributes to Rienzi a fine oration at the showing of the picture, in which he thundered against the vices of the patricians. The contemporary biographer of Rienzi says nothing of this harangue. But, apparently (since history has its liberties as well as fiction), M. Sismondi has thought it convenient to confound two occasions very distinct in themselves.

ment No. 3—very well. Page 9, Vol. D.—what is the account rendered by Vescobaldi, the collector? What! twelve thousand florins,—no more? Unconscionable rascal!” (Here was a loud shout without of “Pandulfo! Long live Pandulfo!”) “Pastrucci, my friend, your head wanders; you are listening to the noise without,—please to amuse yourself with the calculation I intrusted to you. Santi, what is the entry given in by Antonio Tralli?”

A slight tap was heard at the door, and Pandulfo entered.

The clerks continued their labor, though they looked up hastily at the pale and respectable visitor, whose name, to their great astonishment, had thus become a popular cry.

“Ah! my friend,” said Rienzi, calmly enough in voice, but his hands trembled with ill-suppressed emotion, “you would speak to me alone, eh? Well, well; this way.” Thus saying, he led the citizen into a small cabinet in the rear of the room of office, carefully shut the door, and then giving himself up to the natural impatience of his character, seized Pandulfo by the hand. “Speak!” cried he. “Do they take the interpretation? Have you made it plain and palpable enough? Has it sunk deep into their souls?”

“Oh, by Saint Peter, yes!” returned the citizen, whose spirits were elevated by his recent discovery that he, too, was an orator,—a luxurious pleasure for a timid man. “They swallowed every word of the interpretation; they are moved to the marrow; you might lead them this very hour to battle, and find them heroes. As for the sturdy smith—”

“What! Cecco del Vecchio?” interrupted Rienzi. “Ah! his heart is wrought in bronze: what did he?”

“Why, he caught me by the hem of my robe as I descended my rostrum (oh, would you could have seen me! *Per fede*, I had caught your mantle; I was a second *you*!) and said, weeping like a child, ‘Ah, Signor, I am but a poor man, and of little worth; but if every drop of blood in this body were a life, I would give it for my country!’”

“Brave soul,” said Rienzi, with emotion; “would Rome had but fifty such! No man hath done us more good among his own class than Cecco del Vecchio.”

"They feel a protection in his very size," said Pandulfo. "It is something to hear such big words from such a big fellow."

"Were there *any* voices lifted in disapprobation of the picture and its sentiment?"

"None."

"The time is nearly ripe, then; a few suns more, and the fruit must be gathered. The Aventine, the Lateran, and then *the solitary trumpet!*" Thus saying, Rienzi, with folded arms and downcast eyes, seemed sunk into a reverie.

"By the way," said Pandulfo, "I had almost forgot to tell thee that the crowd would have poured themselves hither, so impatient were they to see thee; but I bade Cecco del Vecchio mount the rostrum and tell them, in his blunt way, that it would be unseemly at the present time, when thou wert engaged in the Capitol on civil and holy affairs, to rush in so great a body into thy presence. Did I not right?"

"Most right, my Pandulfo."

"But Cecco del Vecchio says he must come and kiss thy hand; and thou mayest expect him here the moment he can escape unobserved from the crowd."

"He is welcome!" said Rienzi, half mechanically, for he was still absorbed in thought.

"And lo! here he is," as one of the scribes announced the visit of the smith.

"Let him be admitted!" said Rienzi, seating himself composedly.

When the huge smith found himself in the presence of Rienzi, it amused Pandulfo to perceive the wonderful influences of mind over matter. That fierce and sturdy giant, who in all popular commotions towered above his tribe, with thews of stone and nerves of iron, the rallying point and bulwark of the rest, stood now coloring and trembling before the intellect which (so had the eloquent spirit of Rienzi waked and fanned the spark which, till then, had lain dormant in that rough bosom) might almost be said to have created his own. And he, indeed, who first arouses in the bondsman the sense and soul of freedom comes as near as is permitted to man, nearer

than the philosopher, nearer even than the poet, to the great creative attribute of God! But if the breast be uneducated, the gift may curse the giver; and he who passes at once from the slave to the freeman may pass as rapidly from the freeman to the ruffian.

"Approach, my friend," said Rienzi, after a moment's pause; "I know all that thou hast done, and wouldst do, for Rome. Thou art worthy of her best days, and thou art born to share in their return."

The smith dropped at the feet of Rienzi, who held out his hand to raise him, which Cecco del Vecchio seized and reverentially kissed.

"This kiss does not betray," said Rienzi, smiling; "but rise, my friend, — this posture is only due to God and His saints!"

"He is a saint who helps us at need," said the smith, bluntly, "and that no man has done as thou hast. But when," he added, sinking his voice, and fixing his eyes hard on Rienzi, as one may do who waits a signal to strike a blow, "when — when shall we make the great effort?"

"Thou hast spoken to all the brave men in thy neighborhood: are they well prepared?"

"To live or die, as Rienzi bids them!"

"I must have the list — the number, names, houses, and callings — this night."

"Thou shalt."

"Each man must sign his name or mark with his own hand."

"It shall be done."

"Then, hark ye! attend Pandulfo di Guido at his house this evening at sunset. He shall instruct thee where to meet this night some brave hearts; thou art worthy to be ranked amongst them. Thou wilt not fail?"

"By the Holy Stairs! I will count every minute till then," said the smith, his swarthy face lighted with pride at the confidence shown him.

"Meanwhile, watch all your neighbors; let no man flag or grow faint-hearted: none of thy friends must be branded as a traitor!"

"I will cut his throat, were he my own mother's son, if I find one pledged man flinch!" said the fierce smith.

"Ha, ha!" rejoined Rienzi, with that strange laugh which belonged to him, "a miracle! a miracle! The Picture speaks now!"

It was already nearly dusk when Rienzi left the Capitol. The broad space before its walls was empty and deserted, and wrapping his mantle closely round him, he walked musingly on.

"I have almost climbed the height," thought he, "and now the precipice yawns before me. If I fail, what a fall! The last hope of my country falls with me. Never will a noble rise against the nobles; never will another plebeian have the opportunities and the power that I have! Rome is bound up with me,—with a single life. The liberties of all time are fixed to a reed that a wind may uproot. But, O Providence! hast thou not reserved and marked me for great deeds? How, step by step, have I been led on to this solemn enterprise! How has each hour prepared its successor! And yet what danger! *If* the inconstant people, made cowardly by long thralldom, do but waver in the crisis, I am swept away!"

As he spoke, he raised his eyes, and lo! before him the first star of twilight shone calmly down upon the crumbling remnants of the Tarpeian Rock. It was no favoring omen, and Rienzi's heart beat quicker as that dark and ruined mass frowned thus suddenly on his gaze.

"Dread monument," thought he, "of what dark catastrophes, to what unknown schemes, hast thou been the witness! To how many enterprises, on which history is dumb, hast thou set the seal! How know we whether they were criminal or just? How know we whether he, thus doomed as a traitor, would not, if successful, have been immortalized as a deliverer? If I fall, who will write my chronicle? One of the people? Alas! blinded and ignorant, they furnish forth no minds that can appeal to posterity. One of the patricians? In what colors then shall I be painted! No tomb will rise for me amidst the wrecks; no hand scatter flowers upon my grave!"

Thus meditating on the verge of that mighty enterprise to which he had devoted himself, Rienzi pursued his way. He gained the Tiber, and paused for a few moments beside its legendary stream, over which the purple and star-lit heaven shone deeply down. He crossed the bridge which leads to the quarter of the Trastevere, whose haughty inhabitants yet boast themselves the sole descendants of the ancient Romans. Here his step grew quicker and more light; brighter, if less solemn, thoughts crowded upon his breast; and ambition, lulled for a moment, left his strained and over-labored mind to the reign of a softer passion.

CHAPTER XI.

NINA DI RASELLI.

"I TELL you, Lucia, I do not love those stuffs; they do not become me. Saw you ever so poor a dye? This purple, indeed; that crimson! Why did you let the man leave them? Let him take them elsewhere to-morrow. They may suit the signoras on the other side the Tiber, who imagine everything Venetian must be perfect; but I, Lucia, *I* see with my own eyes, and judge from my own mind."

"Ah, dear lady," said the serving-maid, "if you were, as you doubtless will be, some time or other, a grand signora, how worthily you would wear the honors! Santa Cecilia! no other dame in Rome would be looked at while the Lady Nina were by."

"Would we not teach them what pomp was?" answered Nina. "Oh, what festivals would we hold! Saw you not from the gallery the revels given last week by the Lady Giulia Savelli?"

"Ay, Signora; and when you walked up the hall in your silver and pearl tissue, there ran such a murmur through the gallery; every one cried, 'The Savelli have entertained an angel!'"

"Pish! Lucia; no flattery, girl!"

"It is naked truth, lady. But that *was* a revel, was it not? There was grandeur! — fifty servitors in scarlet and gold; and the music playing all the while. The minstrels were sent for from Bergamo. Did not that festival please you? Ah, I warrant many were the fine speeches made to you that day!"

"Heigho! No, there was one voice wanting, and all the music was marred. But, girl, were *I* the Lady Giulia, I would not have been contented with so poor a revel."

"How, poor! Why, all the nobles say it outdid the proudest marriage-feast of the Colonna. Nay, a Neapolitan who sat next me, who had served under the young queen Joanna at her marriage, says that even Naples was outshone."

"That may be, — I know nought of Naples; but I know what *my* court should have been, were I what — what I am not, and may never be! The banquet vessels should have been of gold; the cups jewelled to the brim; not an inch of the rude pavement should have been visible; all should have glowed with cloth of gold. The fountain in the court should have showered up the perfumes of the East; my pages should not have been rough youths, blushing at their own uncouthness, but fair boys, who had not told their twelfth year, culled from the daintiest palaces of Rome; and as for the music, oh, Lucia! each musician should have worn a chaplet, and deserved it; and he who played best should have had a reward, to inspire all the rest, — a rose from me. Saw you, too, the Lady Giulia's robe? What colors, — they might have put out the sun at noonday! yellow, and blue, and orange, and scarlet! Oh, sweet Saints! but my eyes ached all the next day."

"Doubtless, the Lady Giulia lacks your skill in the mixture of colors," said the complaisant waiting-woman.

"And then, too, what a mien, — no royalty in it! She moved along the hall so that her train wellnigh tripped her every moment; and then she said, with a foolish laugh, 'These holiday robes are but troublesome luxuries.' Troth, for the great there should be no holiday robes; 't is for myself, not for others, that I would attire! Every day should have its new robe, more gorgeous than the last; every day should be a holiday!"

"Methought," said Lucia, "that the Lord Giovanni Orsini seemed very devoted to my lady."

"He! the bear!"

"Bear he may be, but he has a costly skin. His riches are untold."

"And the fool knows not how to spend them."

"Was not that the young Lord Adrian who spoke to you just by the columns, where the music played?"

"It might be; I forget."

"Yet I hear that few ladies forget when Lord Adrian di Castello woos them."

"There was but one man whose company seemed to me worth the recollection," answered Nina, unheeding the insinuation of the artful handmaid.

"And who was he?" asked Lucia.

"The old scholar from Avignon."

"What! he with the gray beard? Oh, Signora!"

"Yes," said Nina, with a grave and sad voice; "when he spoke, the whole scene vanished from my eyes, — for he spoke to me of HIM!"

As she said this, the Signora sighed deeply, and the tears gathered to her eyes.

The waiting-woman raised her lips in disdain, and her looks in wonder; but she did not dare to venture a reply.

"Open the lattice," said Nina, after a pause, "and give me yon paper. Not that, girl, but the verses sent me yesterday. What! art thou Italian, and dost thou not know, by instinct, that I spoke of the rhyme of Petrarch?"

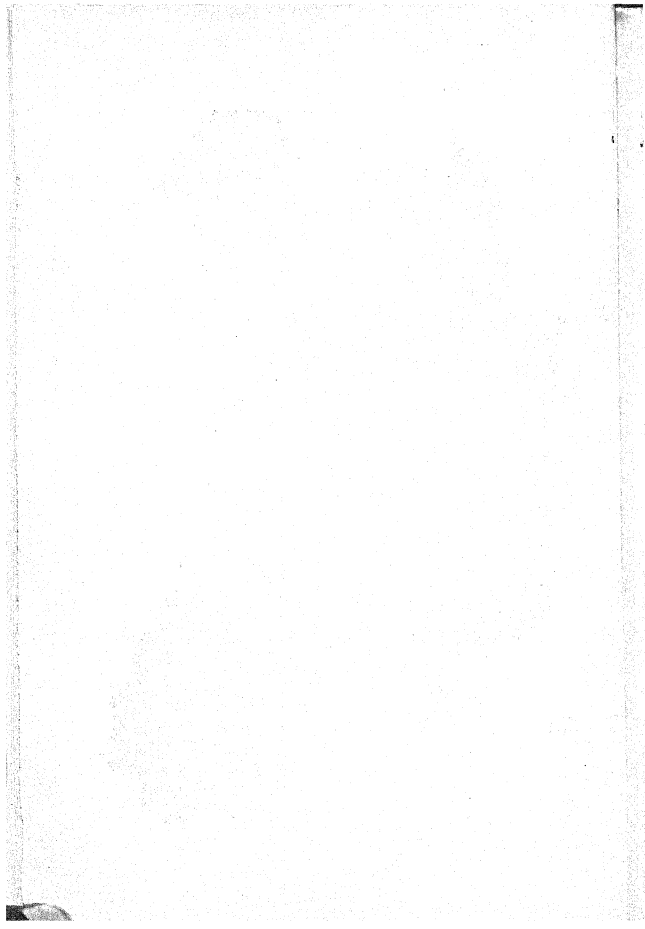
Seated by the open casement, through which the moonlight stole soft and sheen, with one lamp beside her, from which she seemed to shade her eyes, though in reality she sought to hide her countenance from Lucia, the young Signora appeared absorbed in one of those tender sonnets which then turned the brains and inflamed the hearts of Italy.¹

¹ Although it is true that the love sonnets of Petrarch were not then, as now, the most esteemed of his works, yet it has been a great, though a common, error to represent them as little known and coldly admired. Their effect was, in reality, prodigious and universal. Every ballad-singer sang

Born of an impoverished house, which though boasting its descent from a consular race of Rome, scarcely at that day maintained a rank amongst the inferior order of nobility, Nina di Raselli was the spoiled child, the idol and the tyrant, of her parents. The energetic and self-willed character of her mind made her rule where she should have obeyed; and as in all ages dispositions can conquer custom, she had, though in a clime and land where the young and unmarried of her sex are usually chained and fettered, assumed, and by assuming won, the prerogative of independence. She possessed, it is true, more learning and more genius than generally fell to the share of women in that day, and enough of both to be deemed a miracle by her parents. She had also, what they valued more, a surpassing beauty, and what they feared more, an indomitable haughtiness, — a haughtiness mixed with a thousand soft and endearing qualities where she loved, and which, indeed, where she loved, seemed to vanish. At once vain yet high-minded, resolute yet impassioned, there was a gorgeous magnificence in her very vanity and splendor, — an ideality in her waywardness. Her defects made a part of her brilliancy; without them she would have seemed less woman; and, knowing her, you would have compared all women by her standard. Softer qualities beside her seemed not more charming, but more insipid. She had no vulgar ambition, for she had obstinately refused many alliances which the daughter of Raselli could scarcely have hoped to form. The untutored minds and savage power of the Roman nobles seemed to her imagination, which was full of the *poetry* of rank, its luxury and its graces, as something barbarous and revolting, at once to be dreaded and despised. She had, therefore, passed her twentieth year unmarried, but not without love. The faults themselves of her character, elevated that ideal of love which she had formed. She required some being round whom all her vainer qualities could rally; she felt that where she loved she must adore; she demanded no common idol before which to humble so strong and imperious a mind. Unlike women of a gentler mould, them in the streets (says Filippo Villani). *Gravissimi nesciebant abstinere, —* "Even the gravest could not abstain from them."



THE CUMÆAN SIBYL.



who desire for a short period to exercise the caprices of sweet empire, — when she loved she must cease to command, and pride at once be humbled to devotion. So rare were the qualities that could attract her, so imperiously did her haughtiness require that those qualities should be above her own yet of the same order, that her love elevated its object like a god. Accustomed to despise, she felt all the luxury it is to venerate. And if it were her lot to be united with one thus loved, her nature was that which might become elevated by the nature that it gazed on. For her beauty, Reader, shouldst thou ever go to Rome, thou wilt see in the Capitol the picture of the Cumæan Sibyl, which, often copied, no copy can even faintly represent. I beseech thee, mistake not this sibyl for another, for the Roman galleries abound in sibyls.¹ The sibyl I speak of is dark, and the face has an Eastern cast; the robe and turban, gorgeous though they be, grow dim before the rich but transparent roses of the cheek; the hair would be black, save for that golden glow which mellows it to a hue and lustre never seen but in the South, and even in the South most rare; the features, not Grecian, are yet faultless; the mouth, the brow, the ripe and exquisite contour, all are human and voluptuous; the expression, the aspect, is something more; the form is perhaps too full for the perfection of loveliness, for the proportions of sculpture, for the delicacy of Athenian models: but the luxuriant fault has a majesty. Gaze long upon that picture: it charms, yet commands, the eye. While you gaze, you call back five centuries; you see before you the breathing image of *Nina di Raselli*!

But it was not those ingenious and elaborate conceits in which Petrarch, great Poet though he be, has so often mistaken pedantry for passion, that absorbed at that moment the attention of the beautiful *Nina*. Her eyes rested not on the page, but on the garden that stretched below the casement. Over the old fruit-trees and hanging vines fell the moonshine; and in the centre of the green but half-neglected sward, the

¹ The sibyl referred to is the well-known one by Domenichino. As a mere work of art, that by Guercino, called the Persian sibyl, in the same collection, is perhaps superior; but in beauty, in character, there is no comparison.

waters of a small and circular fountain, whose perfect proportions spoke of days long past, played and sparkled in the starlight. The scene was still and beautiful; but neither of its stillness nor its beauty thought Nina: towards one, the gloomiest and most rugged spot in the whole garden, turned her gaze; there the trees stood densely massed together, and shut from view the low but heavy wall which encircled the mansion of Raselli. The boughs on those trees stirred gently, but Nina saw them wave; and now from the copse emerged, slowly and cautiously, a solitary figure, whose shadow threw itself, long and dark, over the sward. It approached the window, and a low voice breathed Nina's name.

"Quick, Lucia!" cried she, breathlessly, turning to her handmaid; "quick! the rope-ladder! it is he! he is come! How slow you are! Haste, girl; he may be discovered! There, — O joy! O joy! My lover! my hero! my Rienzi!"

"It is you!" said Rienzi, as, now entering the chamber, he wound his arms around her half-averted form; "and what is night to others is day to me!"

The first sweet moments of welcome were over, and Rienzi was seated at the feet of his mistress, his head rested on her knees, his face looking up to hers, their hands clasped each in each.

"And for me thou bravest these dangers!" said the lover, — "the shame of discovery, the wrath of thy parents!"

"But what are my perils to thine? Oh, Heaven! if my father found thee here thou wouldst die."

"He would think it then so great a humiliation that thou, beautiful Nina, who mightst match with the haughtiest names of Rome, shouldst waste thy love on a plebeian, even though the grandson of an emperor!"

The proud heart of Nina could sympathize well with the wounded pride of her lover; she detected the soreness which lurked beneath his answer, carelessly as it was uttered.

"Hast thou not told me," she said, "of that great Marius, who was no noble, but from whom the loftiest Colonna would rejoice to claim his descent? And do I not know in thee one who shall yet eclipse the power of Marius, unsullied by his vices?"

"Delicious flattery; sweet prophet!" said Rienzi, with a melancholy smile. "Never were thy supporting promises of the future more welcome to me than now; for to thee I will say what I would utter to none else, — my soul half sinks beneath the mighty burden I have heaped upon it. I want new courage as the dread hour approaches; and from thy words and looks I drink it."

"Oh!" answered Nina, blushing as she spoke, "glorious is indeed the lot which I have bought by my love for thee, — glorious to share thy schemes, to cheer thee in doubt, to whisper hope to thee in danger!"

"And give grace to me in triumph!" added Rienzi, passionately. "Ah! should the future ever place upon these brows the laurel-wreath due to one who has saved his country, what joy, what recompense, to lay it at thy feet! Perhaps, in those long and solitary hours of languor and exhaustion which fill up the interstices of time, the dull space for sober thought between the epochs of exciting action, — perhaps I should have failed and flagged, and renounced even my dreams for Rome, had they not been linked also with my dreams for thee, had I not pictured to myself the hour when my fate should elevate me beyond my birth, when thy sire would deem it no disgrace to give thee to my arms, when thou too shouldst stand amidst the dames of Rome, more honored, as more beautiful, than all, and when I should see that pomp, which my own soul disdains,¹ made dear and grateful to me because associated with thee! Yes, it is these thoughts that have inspired me when sterner ones have shrunk back, appalled from the spectres that surround their goal. And oh, my Nina, sacred, strong, enduring must be indeed the love which lives in the same pure and elevated air as that which sustains my hopes of liberty and fame!"

This was the language which, more even than the vows of fidelity and the dear adulation which springs from the heart's exuberance, had bound the proud and vain soul of Nina to the chains that it so willingly wore. Perhaps, indeed, in the ab-

¹ "Quem semper abhorruī sicut cenum" is the expression used by Rienzi in his letter to his friend at Avignon, and which was probably sincere. Men rarely act according to the bias of their own tastes.

sence of Rienzi her weaker nature pictured to herself the triumph of humbling the high-born signoras and eclipsing the barbarous magnificence of the chiefs of Rome; but in his presence, and listening to his more elevated and generous ambition, as yet all unsullied by one private feeling save the hope of her, her higher sympathies were enlisted with his schemes, her mind aspired to raise itself to the height of his, and she thought less of her own rise than of his glory. It was sweet to her pride to be the sole confidante of his most secret thoughts, as of his most hardy undertakings; to see bared before her that intricate and plotting spirit; to be admitted even to the knowledge of its doubts and weakness, as of its heroism and power.

Nothing could be more contrasted than the loves of Rienzi and Nina, and those of Adrian and Irene: in the latter all were the dreams, the phantasies, the extravagance, of youth; they never talked of the future; they mingled no other aspirations with those of love. Ambition, glory, the world's high objects, were nothing to them when together; their love had swallowed up the world, and left nothing visible beneath the sun save itself. But the passion of Nina and *her* lover was that of more complicated natures and more mature years; it was made up of a thousand feelings, each naturally severed from each, but compelled into one focus by the mighty concentration of love; their talk was of the world; it was from the world that they drew the aliment which sustained it; it was of the future they spoke and thought, of its dreams and imagined glories they made themselves a home and altar; their love had in it more of the Intellectual than that of Adrian and Irene; it was more fitted for this hard earth; it had in it, also, more of the heaven of the later and iron days, and less of poetry and the first golden age.

"And must thou leave me now?" said Nina, her cheek no more averted from his lips, nor her form from his parting embrace. "The moon is high yet; it is but a little hour thou hast given me."

"An hour! Alas!" said Rienzi, "it is near upon midnight; our friends await me."

"Go, then, my soul's best half, go; Nina shall not detain thee one moment from those higher objects which make thee so dear to Nina. When, when shall we meet again?"

"Not," said Rienzi, proudly, and with all his soul upon his brow, "not thus, by stealth, no! nor as I thus have met thee, the obscure and contemned bondsman! When next thou seest me, it shall be at the head of the sons of Rome, her champion, her restorer, or —" said he, sinking his voice —

"There is no *or*!" interrupted Nina, weaving her arms round him and catching his enthusiasm; "thou hast uttered thine own destiny!"

"One kiss more! Farewell! The tenth day from the morrow shines upon the restoration of Rome!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES THAT BEFELL WALTER DE MONTREAL.

It was upon that same evening, and while the earlier stars yet shone over the city, that Walter de Montreal, returning alone to the convent then associated with the church of Santa Maria del Priorata (both of which belonged to the Knights of the Hospital, and in the first of which Montreal had taken his lodgment), paused amidst the ruins and desolation which lay around his path. Though little skilled in the classic memories and associations of the spot, he could not but be impressed with the surrounding witnesses of departed empire, the vast skeleton, as it were, of the dead giantess.

"Now," thought he, as he gazed around upon the roofless columns and shattered walls everywhere visible, over which the starlight shone, ghastly and transparent, backed by the frowning and embattled fortresses of the Frangipani, half hid by the dark foliage that sprang up amidst the very fanes and palaces of old, — Nature exulting over the frailer Art, — "now," thought he, "bookmen would be inspired, by this

scene, with fantastic and dreaming visions of the past. But to me these monuments of high ambition and royal splendor create only images of the future. Rome may yet be, with her seven-hilled diadem, as Rome has been before, — the prize of the strongest hand and the boldest warrior; revived, not by her own degenerate sons, but the infused blood of a new race. William the Bastard could scarce have found the hardy Englishers so easy a conquest as Walter the Well-born may find these eunuch Romans. And which conquest were the more glorious, — the barbarous Isle, or the Metropolis of the World? Short step from the general to the podesta; shorter step from the podesta to the king!"

While thus revolving his wild, yet not altogether chimerical ambition, a quick, light step was heard amidst the long herbage, and looking up, Montreal perceived the figure of a tall female descending from that part of the hill then covered by many convents, towards the base of the Aventine. She supported her steps with a long staff, and moved with such elasticity and erectness that now, as her face became visible by the starlight, it was surprising to perceive that it was the face of one advanced in years, — a harsh, proud countenance, withered and deeply wrinkled, but not without a certain regularity of outline.

"Merciful Virgin!" cried Montreal, starting back as that face gleamed upon him; "is it possible? It is she — it is —"

He sprang forward and stood right before the old woman, who seemed equally surprised, though more dismayed, at the sight of Montreal.

"I have sought thee for years," said the Knight, first breaking the silence, — "years, long years; thy conscience can tell thee why."

"*Mine*, man of blood!" cried the female, trembling with rage or fear. "Darest *thou* talk of conscience, — *thou*, the dishonorer, the robber, the professed homicide; *thou*, disgrace to knighthood and to birth; *thou*, with the cross of chastity and of peace upon thy breast! *thou* talk of conscience, hypocrite! *thou*?"

"Lady, lady!" said Montreal, deprecatingly, and almost quailing beneath the fiery passion of that feeble woman, "I have sinned against thee and thine. But remember all my excuses, — early love, fatal obstacles, rash vow, irresistible temptation! Perhaps," he added, in a more haughty tone, "perhaps yet I may have the power to atone my error, and wring, with mailed hand, from the successor of Saint Peter, who hath power to loose as to bind —"

"Perjured and abandoned," interrupted the female, "dost thou dream that violence can purchase absolution, or that thou canst ever atone the past, — a noble name disgraced, a father's broken heart and dying curse? Yes, that curse, I hear it now! It rings upon me thrillingly, as when I watched the expiring clay; it cleaves to thee, it pursues thee, it shall pierce thee through thy corselet, it shall smite thee in the meridian of thy power! Genius wasted, ambition blasted, penitence deferred, a life of brawls and a death of shame, — thy destruction the offspring of thy crime! To this, to this, an old man's curse hath doomed thee! *AND THOU ART DOOMED!*"

These words were rather shrieked than spoken; and the flashing eye, the lifted hand, the dilated form of the speaker, the hour, the solitude of the ruins around, — all conspired to give to the fearful execration the character of prophecy. The warrior, against whose undaunted breast a hundred spears had shivered in vain, fell appalled and humbled to the ground. He seized the hem of his fierce denouncer's robe, and cried, in a choked and hollow voice, "Spare me! spare me!"

"Spare thee!" said the unrelenting crone: "hast *thou* ever spared man in thy hatred, or woman in thy lust? Ah! grovel in the dust; crouch, crouch, wild beast as thou art, whose sleek skin and beautiful hues have taught the unwary to be blind to the talons that rend, and the grinders that devour, — crouch, that the foot of the old and impotent may spurn thee!"

"Hag!" cried Montreal, in the reaction of sudden fury and maddened pride, springing up to the full height of his stature.

"Hag! thou hast passed the limits to which, remembering who thou art, my forbearance gave thee license. I had well-nigh forgot that thou hadst assumed my part, — *I* am the Accuser! Woman, the boy! Shrink not, equivocate not, lie not: thou wert the thief!"

"I was. Thou taughtest me the lesson how to steal a —"

"Render, restore him!" interrupted Montreal, stamping on the ground with such force that the splinters of the marble fragments on which he stood shivered under his armed heel.

The woman little heeded a violence at which the fiercest warrior of Italy might have trembled; but she did not make an immediate answer. The character of her countenance altered from passion into an expression of grave, intent, and melancholy thought. At length she replied to Montreal, whose hand had wandered to his dagger-hilt with the instinct of long habit, whenever enraged or thwarted, rather than from any design of blood, which, stern and vindictive as he was, he would have been incapable of forming against any woman, much less against the one then before him.

"Walter de Montreal," said she, in a voice so calm that it almost sounded like that of compassion, "the boy, I think, has never known brother or sister; the only child of a once haughty and lordly race on both sides, though now on both dishonored, — nay, why so impatient? thou wilt soon learn the worst, — the boy is dead!"

"Dead!" repeated Montreal, recoiling and growing pale; "dead! No, no, say not that! He has a mother; you know he has! — a fond, meek-hearted, anxious, hoping mother! No, no; he is not dead!"

"Thou canst feel, then, for a mother?" said the old woman, seemingly touched by the tone of the Provençal. "Yet, be-think thee: is it not better that the grave should save him from a life of riot, of bloodshed, and of crime? Better to sleep with God than to wake with the fiends!"

"Dead?" echoed Montreal; "dead? The pretty one! So young! Those eyes — the mother's eyes — closed so soon?"

"Hast thou aught else to say? Thy sight scares my very womanhood from my soul! Let me be gone."

"Dead! May I believe thee? or dost thou mock me? Thou hast uttered *thy* curse, — hearken to *my* warning. If thou hast lied in this, thy last hour shall dismay thee, and thy death-bed shall be the death-bed of despair!"

"Thy lips," replied the female, with a scornful smile, "are better adapted for lewd vows to unhappy maidens than for the denunciations which sound solemn only when coming from the good. Farewell!"

"Stay, inexorable woman, stay! Where sleeps he? Masses shall be sung; priests shall pray; the sins of the father shall not be visited on that young head!"

"At Florence!" returned the woman, hastily. "But no stone records the departed one; the dead boy had no name!"

Waiting for no further questionings, the woman now passed on, pursued her way; and the long herbage and the winding descent soon snatched her ill-omened apparition from the desolate landscape.

Montreal, thus alone, sank with a deep and heavy sigh upon the ground, covered his face with his hands, and burst into an agony of grief; his chest heaved, his whole frame trembled, and he wept and sobbed aloud with all the fearful vehemence of a man whose passions are strong and fierce, but to whom the violence of grief alone is novel and unfamiliar.

He remained thus prostrate and unmanned for a considerable time, growing slowly and gradually more calm as tears relieved his emotion, and at length rather indulging a gloomy revery than a passionate grief. The moon was high and the hour late when he arose, and then few traces of the past excitement remained upon his countenance; for Walter de Montreal was not of that mould in which woe can force a settlement, or to which any affliction can bring the continued and habitual melancholy that darkens those who feel more enduringly, though with emotions less stormy. His were the elements of the true Frank character, though carried to excess; his sternest and his deepest qualities were mingled with fickleness and caprice; his profound sagacity often frustrated by a whim; his towering ambition deserted for some frivolous temptation; and his elastic, sanguine, and high-spirited nature,

faithful only to the desire of military glory, to the poetry of a daring and stormy life, and to the susceptibilities of that tender passion without whose colorings no portrait of chivalry is complete, and in which he was capable of a sentiment, a tenderness, and a loyal devotion which could hardly have been supposed compatible with his reckless levity and his undisciplined career.

"Well," said he, as he rose slowly, folded his mantle round him, and resumed his way, "it was not for *myself* I grieved thus. But the pang is past, and the worst is known. Now, then, back to those things that never die, — restless projects and daring schemes. That hag's curse keeps my blood cold still, and this solitude has something in it weird and awful. Ha! what sudden light is that?"

The light which caught Montreal's eye broke forth almost like a star, scarcely larger, indeed, but more red and intense in its ray. Of itself it was nothing uncommon, and might have shone either from convent or cottage. But it streamed from a part of the Aventine which contained no habitations of the living, but only the empty ruins and shattered porticos, of which even the names and memories of the ancient inhabitants were dead. Aware of this, Montreal felt a slight awe (as the beam threw its steady light over the dreary landscape); for he was not without the knightly superstitions of the age, and it was now the witching hour consecrated to ghost and spirit. But fear, whether of this world or the next, could not long daunt the mind of the hardy freebooter; and after a short hesitation, he resolved to make a digression from his way, and ascertain the cause of the phenomenon. Unconsciously the martial tread of the barbarian passed over the site of the famed or infamous temple of Isis, which had once witnessed those wildest orgies commemorated by Juvenal, and came at last to a thick and dark copse, from an opening in the centre of which gleamed the mysterious light. Penetrating the gloomy foliage, the Knight now found himself before a large ruin, gray and roofless, from within which came, indistinct and muffled, the sound of voices. Through a rent in the wall forming a kind of casement, and about ten feet

from the ground, the light now broke over the matted and rank soil, embedded, as it were, in vast masses of shade, and streaming through a mouldering portico hard at hand. The Provençal stood, though he knew it not, on the very place once consecrated by the Temple, — the Portico and the Library of Liberty (the first public library instituted in Rome). The wall of the ruin was covered with innumerable creepers and wild brushwood, and it required but little agility on the part of Montreal, by the help of these, to raise himself to the height of the aperture, and, concealed by the luxuriant foliage, to gaze within. He saw a table lighted with tapers, in the centre of which was a crucifix, a dagger unsheathed, an open scroll which the event proved to be of sacred character, and a brazen bowl. About a hundred men, in cloaks and with black vizards, stood motionless around; and one, taller than the rest, without disguise or mask, whose pale brow and stern features seemed by that light yet paler and yet more stern, appeared to be concluding some address to his companions.

"Yes," said he, "in the church of the Lateran I will make the last appeal to the people. Supported by the Vicar of the Pope, myself an officer of the Pontiff, it will be seen that Religion and Liberty — the heroes and the martyrs — are united in one cause. After that time, words are idle; action must begin. By this crucifix I pledge my faith, on this blade I devote my life, to the regeneration of Rome! And you (then no need for mask or mantle!), when the solitary trumpet is heard, when the solitary horseman is seen, *you*, swear to rally round the standard of the Republic, and resist — with heart and hand, with life and soul, in defiance of death and in hope of redemption — the arms of the oppressor!"

"We swear, we swear!" exclaimed every voice; and crowding towards cross and weapon, the tapers were obscured by the intervening throng, and Montreal could not perceive the ceremony, nor hear the muttered formula of the oath, but he could guess that the rite then common to conspiracies — and which required each conspirator to shed some drops of his own blood, in token that life itself was devoted to the enterprise — had not been omitted, when, the group again receding,

the same figure as before had addressed the meeting, holding on high the bowl with both hands, — while from the left arm, which was bared, the blood weltered slowly, and trickled, drop by drop, upon the ground, — said, in a solemn voice and upturned eyes, —

“Amidst the ruins of thy temple, O Liberty, we, Romans, dedicate to thee this libation! We, befriended and inspired by no unreal and fabled idols, but by the Lord of Hosts and Him who, descending to earth, appealed, not to emperors and to princes, but to the fisherman and the peasant, giving to the lowly and the poor the mission of Revelation.” Then, turning suddenly to his companions as his features, singularly varying in their character and expression, brightened from solemn awe into a martial and kindling enthusiasm, he cried aloud, “Death to the Tyranny! Life to the Republic!” The effect of the transition was startling. Each man, as by an involuntary and irresistible impulse, laid his hand upon his sword as he echoed the sentiment; some, indeed, drew forth their blades, as if for instant action.

“I have seen enow, they will break up anon,” said Montreal to himself; “and I would rather face an army of thousands than even half-a-dozen enthusiasts so inflamed, and I thus detected.” And with this thought he dropped on the ground and glided away, as, once again, through the still midnight air, broke upon his ear the muffled shout — “DEATH TO THE TYRANNY! LIFE TO THE REPUBLIC!”

BOOK II.

THE REVOLUTION.

OGNI lascivia, ogni male, nulla giustizia, nullo freno. Non c'era piu remedia, ogni persona periva. Allora Cola di Rienzi, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. chap. 2.

Every kind of lewdness, every form of evil; no justice, no restraint. Remedy there was none; perdition fell on all. Then Cola di Rienzi, etc. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE KNIGHT OF PROVENCE, AND HIS PROPOSAL.

It was nearly noon as Adrian entered the gates of the palace of Stephen Colonna. The palaces of the nobles were not then, as we see them now, receptacles for the immortal canvas of Italian and the imperishable sculpture of Grecian Art; but still to this day are retained the massive walls and barred windows and spacious courts which at that time protected their rude retainers. High above the gates rose a lofty and solid tower, whose height commanded a wide view of the mutilated remains of Rome; the gate itself was adorned and strengthened on either side by columns of granite, whose Doric capitals betrayed the sacrilege that had torn them from one of the many temples that had formerly crowded the sacred Forum. From the same spoils came, too, the vast fragments of travertine which made the walls of the outer court. So common at that day were these barbarous appropriations of the most precious monuments of art that the columns and domes of earlier Rome were regarded by all classes but as quarries from which every man was free to gather the materials, whether for his castle or his cottage, — a wantonness of outrage far greater

than the Goths', to whom a later age would fain have attributed all the disgrace, and which, more perhaps than even heavier offences, excited the classical indignation of Petrarch and made him sympathize with Rienzi in his hopes of Rome. Still may you see the churches of that or even earlier dates, of the most shapeless architecture, built on the sites, and from the marbles, consecrating (rather than consecrated by) the names of Venus, of Jupiter, of Minerva. The palace of the Prince of the Orsini, Duke of Gravina, is yet reared above the graceful arches (still visible) of the theatre of Marcellus, then a fortress of the Savelli.

As Adrian passed the court a heavy wagon blocked up the way, laden with huge marbles dug from the unexhausted mine of the Golden House of Nero; they were intended for an additional tower, by which Stephen Colonna proposed yet more to strengthen the tasteless and barbarous edifice in which the old noble maintained the dignity of outraging the law.

The friend of Petrarch and the pupil of Rienzi sighed deeply as he passed this vehicle of new spoliations, and as a pillar of fluted alabaster, rolling carelessly from the wagon, fell with a loud crash upon the pavement. At the foot of the stairs grouped some dozen of the bandits whom the old Colonna entertained. They were playing at dice upon an ancient tomb, the clear and deep inscription on which (so different from the slovenly character of the later empire) bespoke it a memorial of the most powerful age of Rome, and which, now empty even of ashes, and upset, served for a table to these foreign savages, and was strewn, even at that early hour, with fragments of meat and flasks of wine. They scarcely stirred, they scarcely looked up, as the young noble passed them; and their fierce oaths and loud ejaculations, uttered in a northern *patois*, grated harshly upon his ear as he mounted, with a slow step, the lofty and unclean stairs. He came into a vast ante-chamber, which was half-filled with the higher class of the patrician's retainers. Some five or six pages, chosen from the inferior *noblesse*, congregated by a narrow and deep-sunk case-ment, were discussing the grave matters of gallantry and intrigue; three petty chieftains of the band below, with their

corselets donned and their swords and casques beside them, were sitting, stolid and silent, at a table, in the middle of the room, and might have been taken for automatons, save for the solemn regularity with which they ever and anon lifted to their mustachioed lips their several goblets, and then, with a complacent grunt, re-settled to their contemplations. Striking was the contrast which their Northern phlegm presented to a crowd of Italian clients and petitioners and parasites, who walked restlessly to and fro, talking loudly to each other with all the vehement gestures and varying physiognomy of Southern vivacity. There was a general stir and sensation as Adrian broke upon this miscellaneous company. The bandit captains nodded their heads mechanically; the pages bowed, and admired the fashion of his plume and hose; the clients and petitioners and parasites crowded round him, each with a separate request for interest with his potent kinsman. Great need had Adrian of his wonted urbanity and address in extricating himself from their grasp; and painfully did he win, at last, the low and narrow door at which stood a tall servitor, who admitted or rejected the applicants, according to his interest or caprice.

"Is the Baron alone?" asked Adrian.

"Why, no, my lord; a foreign signor is with him, — but to you he is of course visible."

"Well, you may admit me. I would inquire of his health."

The servitor opened the door, through whose aperture peered many a jealous and wistful eye, and consigned Adrian to the guidance of a page, who, older and of greater esteem than the loiterers in the ante-room, was the especial henchman of the lord of the castle. Passing another, but empty chamber, vast and dreary, Adrian found himself in a small cabinet and in the presence of his kinsman.

Before a table bearing the implements of writing, sat the old Colonna. A robe of rich furs and velvet hung loose upon his tall and stately frame; from a round skull-cap, of comforting warmth and crimson hue, a few gray locks descended and mixed with a long and reverent beard. The countenance of the aged noble, who had long passed his eightieth year, still

retained the traces of a comeliness for which in earlier manhood he was remarkable. His eyes, if deep-sunken, were still keen and lively, and sparkled with all the fire of youth; his mouth curved upward in a pleasant though half-satiric smile; and his appearance on the whole was prepossessing and commanding, indicating rather the high blood, the shrewd wit, and the gallant valor of the patrician, than his craft, hypocrisy, and habitual but disdainful spirit of oppression.

Stephen Colonna, without being absolutely a hero, was indeed far braver than most of the Romans, though he held fast to the Italian maxim, never to fight an enemy while it is possible to cheat him. Two faults, however, marred the effect of his sagacity: a supreme insolence of disposition, and a profound belief in the lights of his experience. He was incapable of analogy. What had never happened in his time, he was perfectly persuaded never could happen. Thus, though generally esteemed an able diplomatist, he had the cunning of the intriguer, and not the providence of a statesman. If, however, pride made him arrogant in prosperity, it supported him in misfortune. And in the earlier vicissitudes of a life which had partly been consumed in exile, he had developed many noble qualities of fortitude, endurance, and real greatness of soul, which showed that his failings were rather acquired by circumstance than derived from nature. His numerous and high-born race were proud of their chief, and with justice; for he was the ablest and most honored, not only of the direct branch of the Colonna, but also, perhaps, of all the more powerful barons.

Seated at the same table with Stephen Colonna was a man of noble presence, of about three or four and thirty years of age, in whom Adrian instantly recognized Walter de Montreal. This celebrated knight was scarcely of the personal appearance which might have corresponded with the terror his name generally excited. His face was handsome, almost to the extreme of womanish delicacy. His fair hair waved long and freely over a white and unwrinkled forehead; the life of a camp and the suns of Italy had but little embrowned his clear and healthful complexion, which retained much of the bloom

of youth. His features were aquiline and regular; his eyes, of a light hazel, were large, bright, and penetrating; and a short, but curled beard and mustachio, trimmed with soldier-like precision, and very little darker than the hair, gave indeed a martial expression to his comely countenance, but rather the expression which might have suited the hero of courts and tournaments than the chief of a brigand's camp. The aspect, manner, and bearing of the Provençal were those which captivate rather than awe, blending, as they did, a certain military frankness with the easy and graceful dignity of one conscious of gentle birth and accustomed to mix, on equal terms, with the great and noble. His form happily contrasted and elevated the character of a countenance which required strength and stature to free its uncommon beauty from the charge of effeminacy, being of great height and remarkable muscular power, without the least approach to clumsy and unwieldy bulk, — it erred, indeed, rather to the side of leanness than flesh; at once robust and slender. But the chief personal distinction of this warrior, the most redoubted lance of Italy, was an air and carriage of chivalric and heroic grace, greatly set off at this time by his splendid dress, which was of brown velvet sown with pearls, over which hung the surcoat worn by the Knights of the Hospital, whereon was wrought, in white, the eight-pointed cross that made the badge of his order. The Knight's attitude was that of earnest conversation, bending slightly forward towards the Colonna, and resting both his hands — which (according to the usual distinction of the old Norman race,¹ from whom, though born in Provence, Montreal boasted his descent) were small and delicate, the fingers being covered with jewels, as was the fashion of the day — upon the golden hilt of an enormous sword, on the sheath of which was elaborately wrought the silver lilies that made the device of the Provençal Brotherhood of Jerusalem.

¹ *Small hands and feet, however disproportioned to the rest of the person, were at that time deemed no less a distinction of the well-born than they have been in a more refined age. Many readers will remember the pain occasioned to Petrarch by his tight shoes. The supposed beauty of this peculiarity is more derived from the feudal than the classic time.*

"Good morrow, fair kinsman!" said Stephen. "Scat thyself, I pray; and know in this knightly visitor the celebrated *Sieur de Montreal*."

"Ah, my lord," said Montreal, smiling, as he saluted Adrian, "and how is my lady at home?"

"You mistake, Sir Knight," quoth Stephen; "my young kinsman is not yet married. Faith, as Pope Boniface remarked, when he lay stretched on a sick-bed, and his confessor talked to him about Abraham's bosom, 'that is a pleasure the greater for being deferred.'"

"The Signor will pardon my mistake," returned Montreal.

"But not," said Adrian, "the neglect of Sir Walter in not ascertaining the fact in person. My thanks to him, noble kinsman, are greater than you weet of; and he promised to visit me, that he might receive them at leisure."

"I assure you, Signor," answered Montreal, "that I have not forgotten the invitation; but so weighty hitherto have been my affairs at Rome that I have been obliged to parley with my impatience to better our acquaintance."

"Oh, ye knew each other before?" said Stephen. "And how?"

"My lord, there is a damsel in the case," replied Montreal. "Excuse my silence."

"Ah, Adrian, Adrian! when will you learn my continence!" said Stephen, solemnly stroking his gray beard. "What an example I set you! But a truce to this light conversation; let us resume our theme. You must know, Adrian, that it is to the brave band of my guest I am indebted for those valiant gentlemen below, who keep Rome so quiet, though my poor habitation so noisy. He has called to proffer more assistance, if need be, and to advise me on the affairs of Northern Italy. Continue, I pray thee, Sir Knight; I have no disguises from my kinsman."

"Thou seest," said Montreal, fixing his penetrating eyes on Adrian, "thou seest, doubtless, my lord, that Italy at this moment presents to us a remarkable spectacle. It is a contest between two opposing powers, which shall destroy the other. The one power is that of the unruly and turbulent

people, — a power which they call 'Liberty;' the other power is that of the chiefs and princes, — a power which they more appropriately call 'Order.' Between these parties the cities of Italy are divided. In Florence, in Genoa, in Pisa, for instance, is established a Free State, — a Republic, God wot! and a more riotous, unhappy state of government cannot well be imagined."

"That is perfectly true," quoth Stephen; "they banished my own first cousin from Genoa."

"A perpetual strife, in short," continued Montreal, "between the great families; an alternation of prosecutions and confiscations and banishments: to-day the Guelfs proscribe the Ghibellines; to-morrow the Ghibellines drive out the Guelfs. This may be liberty, but it is the liberty of the strong against the weak. In the other cities, as Milan, as Verona, as Bologna, the people are under the rule of one man, who calls himself a prince, and whom his enemies call a tyrant. Having more force than any other citizen, he preserves a firm government; having more constant demand on his intellect and energies than the other citizens, he also preserves a wise one. These two orders of government are enlisted against each other; whenever the people in the one rebel against their prince, the people of the other — that is the Free States — send arms and money to their assistance."

"You hear, Adrian, how wicked those last are," quoth Stephen.

"Now it seems to me," continued Montreal, "that this contest must end some time or other. All Italy must become republican or monarchical. It is easy to predict which will be the result."

"Yes, Liberty must conquer in the end!" said Adrian, warmly.

"Pardon me, young lord; my opinion is entirely the reverse. You perceive that these republics are commercial, are traders; they esteem wealth, they despise valor, they cultivate all trades save that of the armorer. Accordingly, how do they maintain themselves in war? By their own citizens? Not a whit of it! Either they send to some foreign chief, and

promise, if he grant them his protection, the principality of the city for five or ten years in return, or else they borrow from some hardy adventurer, like myself, as many troops as they can afford to pay for. Is it not so, Lord Adrian?"

Adrian nodded his reluctant assent.

"Well, then, it is the fault of the foreign chief if he do not make his power permanent, — as has been already done in States once free by the Visconti and the Scala, — or else it is the fault of the captain of the mercenaries if he do not convert his brigands into senators, and himself into a king. These are events so natural that one day or other they will occur throughout all Italy. And all Italy will then become monarchical. Now it seems to me the interest of all the powerful families — your own at Rome, as that of the Visconti at Milan — to expedite this epoch, and to check, while you yet may with ease, that rebellious contagion amongst the people which is now rapidly spreading, and which ends in the fever of license to them, but in the corruption of death to you. In these free States the nobles are the first to suffer: first your privileges, then your property, are swept away. Nay, in Florence, as ye well know, my lords, no noble is even capable of holding the meanest office in the State."

"Villains!" said Colonna; "they violate the first law of nature!"

"At this moment," resumed Montreal, who, engrossed with his subject, little heeded the interruptions he received from the holy indignation of the Baron, "at this moment there are many — the wisest, perhaps, in the free States — who desire to renew the old Lombard leagues, in defence of their common freedom everywhere, and against whosoever shall aspire to be prince. Fortunately the deadly jealousies between these merchant States — the base plebeian jealousies, more of trade than of glory — interpose at present an irresistible obstacle to this design; and Florence, the most stirring and the most esteemed of all, is happily so reduced by reverses of commerce as to be utterly unable to follow out so great an undertaking. Now, then, is the time for us, my lords: while these obstacles are so great for our foes, now is the time for us to form and

cement a counter-league between all the princes of Italy. To you, noble Stephen, I have come, as your rank demands, alone of all the barons of Rome, to propose to you this honorable union. Observe what advantages it proffers to your house. The popes have abandoned Rome forever; there is no counterpoise to your ambition, — there need be none to your power. You see before you the examples of Visconti and Taddeo di Pepoli. You may found in Rome, the first city of Italy, a supreme and uncontrolled principality, subjugate utterly your weaker rivals, the Savelli, the Malatesta, the Orsini, and leave to your sons' sons an hereditary kingdom that may aspire once more, perhaps, to the empire of the world."

Stephen shaded his face with his hand as he answered: "But this, noble Montreal, requires means, — money and men."

"Of the last, you can command from me enow, — my small company, the best disciplined, can (whenever I please) swell to the most numerous in Italy; in the first, noble Baron, the rich house of Colonna cannot fail: and even a mortgage on its vast estates may be well repaid when you have possessed yourself of the whole revenues of Rome. You see," continued Montreal, turning to Adrian, in whose youth he expected a more warm ally than in his hoary kinsman, "you see at a glance how feasible is this project, and what a mighty field it opens to your house."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, rising from his seat and giving vent to the indignation he had with difficulty suppressed, "I grieve much that, beneath the roof of the first citizen of Rome, a stranger should attempt thus calmly, and without interruption, to excite the ambition of emulating the execrated celebrity of a Visconti or a Pepoli. Speak, my lord!" turning to Stephen, "speak, noble kinsman! and tell this Knight of Provence that if by a Colonna the ancient grandeur of Rome cannot be restored, it shall not be, at least by a Colonna, that her last wrecks of liberty shall be swept away."

"How now, Adrian! How now, sweet kinsman!" said Stephen, thus suddenly appealed to; "calm thyself, I pr'ythee. Noble Sir Walter, he is young, — young and hasty; he means not to offend thee."

"Of that I am persuaded," returned Montreal, coldly, but with great and courteous command of temper. "He speaks from the impulse of the moment, — a praiseworthy fault in youth. It was mine at his age, and many a time have I nearly lost my life for the rashness. Nay, Signor, nay; touch not your sword so meaningly, as if you fancied I intimated a threat, — far from me such presumption. I have learned sufficient caution, believe me, in the wars, not wantonly to draw against me a blade which I have seen wielded against such odds."

Touched, despite himself, by the courtesy of the Knight, and the allusion to a scene in which perhaps his life had been preserved by Montreal, Adrian extended his hand to the latter.

"I was to blame for my haste," said he, frankly; "but know, by my very heat," he added, more gravely, "that your project will find no friends among the Colonna. Nay, in the presence of my noble kinsman, I dare to tell you that could even his high sanction lend itself to such a scheme, the best hearts of his house would desert him; and I myself, his kinsman, would man yonder castle against so unnatural an ambition!"

A slight and scarce perceptible cloud passed over Montreal's countenance at these words; and he bit his lip ere he replied:

"Yet if the Orsini be less scrupulous, their first exertion of power would be heard in the crashing house of the Colonna."

"Know you," returned Adrian, "that one of our mottoes is this haughty address to the Romans: 'If we fall, ye fall also'? And better that fate than arise upon the wrecks of our native city."

"Well, well, well!" said Montreal, reseating himself, "I see that I must leave Rome to herself; the League must thrive without her aid. I did but jest touching the Orsini, for they have not the power that would make their efforts safe. Let us sweep, then, our past conference from our recollection. It is the nineteenth, I think, Lord Colonna, on which you propose to repair to Corneto with your friends and retainers, and on which you have invited my attendance?"

"It is on that day, Sir Knight," replied the Baron, evidently much relieved by the turn the conversation had assumed. "The

fact is that we have been so charged with indifference to the interests of the good people that I strain a point in this expedition to contradict the assertion; and we propose, therefore, to escort and protect, against the robbers of the road, a convoy of corn to Corneto. In truth, I may add another reason, besides fear of the robbers, that makes me desire as numerous a train as possible. I wish to show my enemies and the people generally the solid and growing power of my house; the display of such an armed band as I hope to levy will be a magnificent occasion to strike awe into the riotous and refractory. Adrian, you will collect your servitors, I trust, on that day; we would not be without you."

"And as we ride along, fair Signor," said Montreal, inclining to Adrian, "we will find at least one subject on which we can agree; all brave men and true knights have one common topic, and its name is Woman. You must make me acquainted with the names of the fairest dames of Rome; and we will discuss old adventures in the Parliament of Love, and hope for new. By the way, I suppose, Lord Adrian, you, with the rest of your countrymen, are Petrarch-stricken?"

"Do you not share our enthusiasm? Slur not so your gallantry, I pray you."

"Come, we must not again disagree; but, by my halidame, I think one troubadour roundel worth all that Petrarch ever wrote. He has but borrowed from our knightly poesy to disguise it, like a carpet coxcomb."

"Well," said Adrian, gayly, "for every line of the troubadours that you quote, I will cite you another. I will forgive you for injustice to Petrarch if you are just to the troubadours."

"Just!" cried Montreal, with real enthusiasm; "I am of the land, nay, the very blood, of the troubadour! But we grow too light for your noble kinsman, and it is time for me to bid you, for the present, farewell. My Lord Colonna, peace be with you; farewell, Sir Adrian, brother mine in knighthood, remember your challenge!"

And with an easy and careless grace the Knight of St. John took his leave. The old Baron, making a dumb sign of excuse to Adrian, followed Montreal into the adjoining room.

"Sir Knight!" said he, "Sir Knight!" as he closed the door upon Adrian, and then drew Montreal to the recess of the casement, "a word in your ear. Think not I slight your offer, but these young men must be managed; the plot is great, noble, grateful to my heart, but it requires time and caution. I have many of my house, scrupulous as yon hot-skull, to win over. The way is pleasant, but must be sounded well and carefully; you understand?"

From under his bent brows Montreal darted one keen glance at Stephen, and then answered, —

"My friendship for you dictated my offer. The League may stand without the Colonna: beware a time when the Colonna cannot stand without the League. My lord, look well around you. There are more freemen — ay, bold and stirring ones too — in Rome than you imagine. Beware Rienzi! Adieu; we meet soon again."

Thus saying, Montreal departed, soliloquizing as he passed with his careless step through the crowded ante-room, —

"I shall fail here! These caitiff nobles have neither the courage to be great, nor the wisdom to be honest. Let them fall! I may find an adventurer from the people, an adventurer like myself, worth them all."

No sooner had Stephen returned to Adrian than he flung his arms affectionately round his ward, who was preparing his pride for some sharp rebuke for his petulance.

"Nobly feigned, admirable, admirable!" cried the Baron; "you have learned the true art of a statesman at the Emperor's court. I always thought you would; always said it. You saw the dilemma I was in, thus taken by surprise by that barbarian's mad scheme, — afraid to refuse, more afraid to accept. You extricated me with consummate address: that passion — so natural to your age — was a famous feint; drew off the attack; gave me time to breathe; allowed me to play with the savage. But we must not offend him, you know; all my retainers would desert me, or sell me to the Orsini, or cut my throat, if he but held up his finger. Oh! it was admirably managed, Adrian, admirably!"

"Thank Heaven!" said Adrian, with some difficulty recover-

ing the breath which his astonishment had taken away. "You do not think of embracing that black proposition?"

"Think of it? no, indeed!" said Stephen, throwing himself back on his chair. "Why, do you not know my age, boy? Hard on my ninetieth year, I should be a fool indeed to throw myself into such a whirl of turbulence and agitation. I want to keep what I have, not risk it by grasping more. Am I not the beloved of the Pope: shall I hazard his excommunication? Am I not the most powerful of the nobles: should I be more if I were king? At my age, to talk to me of such stuff! — the man's an idiot. Besides," added the old man, sinking his voice and looking fearfully round, "if I were a king, my sons might poison me for the succession. They are good lads, Adrian, very; but such a temptation, — I would not throw it in their way! These gray hairs have experience. Tyrants don't die a natural death; no, no! Plague on the Knight, say I; he has already cast me into a cold sweat."

Adrian gazed on the working features of the old man, whose selfishness thus preserved him from crime. He listened to his concluding words, full of the dark truth of the times; and as the high and pure ambition of Rienzi flashed upon him in contrast, he felt that he could not blame its fervor or wonder at its excess.

"And then, too," resumed the Baron, speaking more deliberately as he recovered his self-possession, "this man, by way of a warning, shows me, at a glance, his whole ignorance of the state. What think you? He has mingled with the mob, and taken their rank breath for power; yes, he thinks words are soldiers, and bade me — me, Stephen Colonna — beware, — of whom, think you? No, you will never guess! Of that speech-maker, Rienzi; my own old jesting guest! Ha! ha! ha! The ignorance of these barbarians! ha! ha! ha!" and the old man laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Yet many of the nobles fear that same Rienzi," said Adrian, gravely.

"Ah! let them, let them; they have not our experience, our knowledge of the world, Adrian. Tut, man, when did declamation ever overthrow castles and conquer soldiery? I like

Rienzi to harangue the mob about old Rome and such stuff; it gives them something to think of and prate about, and so all their fierceness evaporates in words: they might burn a house if they did not hear a speech. But, now I am on that score, I must own the pedant has grown impudent in his new office; here, here, — I received this paper ere I rose to-day. I hear a similar insolence has been shown to all the nobles. Read it, will you?" and the Colonna put a scroll into his kinsman's hand.

"I have received the like," said Adrian, glancing at it. "It is a request of Rienzi to attend at the church of St. John of Lateran, to hear explained the inscription on a Table just discovered. It bears, he saith, the most intimate connection with the welfare and state of Rome."

"Very entertaining, I dare to say, to professors and bookmen. Pardon me, kinsman, — I forgot your taste for these things; and my son Gianni too shares your fantasy. Well, well, it is innocent enough! Go; the man talks well."

"Will you not attend too?"

"I, my dear boy, I!" said the old Colonna, opening his eyes in such astonishment that Adrian could not help laughing at the simplicity of his own question.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW, AND THE DOUBT.

As Adrian turned from the palace of his guardian and bent his way in the direction of the Forum, he came somewhat unexpectedly upon Raimond, bishop of Orvieto, who, mounted upon a low palfrey, and accompanied by some three or four of his waiting-men, halted abruptly when he recognized the young noble.

"Ah! my son, it is seldom that I see thee. How fares it with thee? Well? So, so! I rejoice to hear it. Alas! what

a state of society is ours, when compared to the tranquil pleasures of Avignon! There, all men who, like us, are fond of the same pursuits, the same studies, *deliciæ musarum*, hum! hum!" the Bishop was proud of an occasional quotation, right or wrong, "are brought easily and naturally together. But here we scarcely dare stir out of our houses, save upon great occasions. But talking of great occasions and the Muses, reminds me of our good Rienzi's invitation to the Lateran: of course you will attend? 'Tis a mighty knotty piece of Latin he proposes to solve, — so I hear, at least; very interesting to us, my son, very!"

"It is to-morrow," answered Adrian. "Yes, assuredly, I will be there."

"And harkye, my son," said the Bishop, resting his hand affectionately on Adrian's shoulder, "I have reason to hope that he will remind our poor citizens of the Jubilee for the year Fifty, and stir them towards clearing the road of the brigands, — a necessary injunction, and one to be heeded timeously; for who will come here for absolution when he stands a chance of rushing unannealed upon purgatory by the way? You have heard Rienzi, — ay? Quite a Cicero, quite! Well, Heaven bless you, my son! you will not fail?"

"Nay, not I."

"Yet, stay; a word with you. Just suggest to all whom you may meet the advisability of a full meeting: it looks well for the city to show respect to letters."

"To say nothing of the Jubilee," added Adrian, smiling.

"Ah, to say nothing of the Jubilee — very good! Adieu for the present!" And the Bishop, resettling himself on his saddle, ambled solemnly on to visit his various friends and press them to the meeting.

Meanwhile Adrian continued his course till he had passed the Capitol, the arch of Severus, the crumbling columns of the fane of Jupiter, and found himself amidst the long grass, the whispering reeds, and the neglected vines that wave over the now-vanished pomp of the Golden House of Nero. Seating himself on a fallen pillar, — by that spot where the traveller descends to the (so-called) Baths of Livia, — he looked impa-

tiently to the sun, as to blame it for the slowness of its march.

Not long, however, had he to wait before a light step was heard crushing the fragrant grass; and presently through the arching vines gleamed a face that might well have seemed the nymph, the goddess of the scene.

"My beautiful! my Irene! How shall I thank thee!"

It was long before the delighted lover suffered himself to observe upon Irene's face a sadness that did not usually cloud it in his presence. Her voice, too, trembled; her words seemed constrained and cold.

"Have I offended thee?" he asked; "or what less misfortune hath occurred?"

Irene raised her eyes to her lover's, and said, looking at him earnestly, "Tell me, my lord, in sober and simple truth, tell me, would it grieve thee much were this to be our last meeting?"

Paler than the marble at his feet grew the dark cheek of Adrian. It was some moments ere he could reply, and he did so then with a forced smile and a quivering lip.

"Jest not so, Irene! Last! — that is not a word for us!"

"But hear me, my lord —"

"Why so cold? Call me Adrian! friend! lover! or be dumb!"

"Well, then, my soul's soul! my all of hope! my life's life!" exclaimed Irene, passionately, "hear me! I fear that we stand at this moment upon some gulf whose depth I see not, but which may divide us forever! Thou knowest the real nature of my brother, and dost not misread him as many do. Long has he planned and schemed and communed with himself, and feeling his way amidst the people, prepared the path to some great design. But now — Thou wilt not betray, thou wilt not injure him? He is *thy* friend!"

"And thy brother! I would give my life for his! Say on!"

"But now, then," resumed Irene, "the time for that enterprise, whatever it be, is coming fast. I know not of its exact nature, but I know that it is against the nobles, — against thy

order, against thy house itself! If it succeed, oh, Adrian! thou thyself mayst not be free from danger, and my name, at least, will be coupled with the name of thy foes. If it fail, my brother, my bold brother, is swept away; he will fall a victim to revenge or justice, call it as you will. Your kinsman may be his judge, his executioner; and I — even if I should yet live to mourn over the boast and glory of my humble line — could I permit myself to love, to see one in whose veins flowed the blood of his destroyer? Oh, I am wretched, wretched; these thoughts make me well-nigh mad!" and wringing her hands bitterly, Irene sobbed aloud.

Adrian himself was struck forcibly by the picture thus presented to him, although the alternative it embraced had often before forced itself dimly on his mind. It was true, however, that, not seeing the schemes of Rienzi backed by any physical power, and never yet having witnessed the mighty force of a moral revolution, he did not conceive that any rise to which he might instigate the people could be permanently successful; and as for his punishment, in that city where all justice was the slave of interest, Adrian knew himself powerful enough to obtain forgiveness even for the greatest of all crimes, — armed insurrection against the nobles. As these thoughts recurred to him, he gained the courage to console and cheer Irene. But his efforts were only partially successful. Awakened by her fears to that consideration of the future which hitherto she had forgotten, Irene for the first time seemed deaf to the charmer's voice.

"Alas!" said she, sadly, "even at the best, what can this love, that we have so blindly encouraged, what can it end in? Thou must not wed with one like me! And I, — how foolish I have been!"

"Recall thy senses then, Irene," said Adrian, proudly, partly perhaps in anger, partly in his experience of the sex. "Love another, and more wisely, if thou wilt; cancel thy vows with me, and continue to think it a crime to love, and a folly to be true!"

"Cruel!" said Irene, falteringly, and in her turn alarmed. "Dost thou speak in earnest?"

"Tell me, ere I answer you, tell me this : come death, come anguish, come a whole life of sorrow as the end of this love, wouldst thou yet repent that thou hast loved ? If so, thou knowest not the love that I feel for thee."

"Never, never can I repent!" said Irene, falling upon Adrian's neck ; "forgive me!"

"But is there, in truth," said Adrian, a little while after this lover-like quarrel and reconciliation, "is there, in truth, so marked a difference between thy brother's past and his present bearing ? How knowest thou that the time for action is so near ?"

"Because now he sits closeted whole nights with all ranks of men ; he shuts up his books, he reads no more, but when alone, walks to and fro his chamber, muttering to himself. Sometimes he pauses before the calendar, which of late he has fixed with his own hand against the wall, and passes his finger over the letters till he comes to some chosen date, and then he plays with his sword and smiles. But two nights since, arms, too, in great number were brought to the house ; and I heard the chief of the men who brought them, a grim giant, known well amongst the people, say, as he wiped his brow : 'These will see work soon !'"

"Arms ! Are you sure of that ?" said Adrian, anxiously. "Nay, then, there is more in these schemes than I imagined ! But," observing Irene's gaze bent fearfully on him as his voice changed, he added more gayly, "but come what may, believe me, my beautiful ! my adored ! that while I live, thy brother shall not suffer from the wrath he may provoke ; nor I, though he forget our ancient friendship, cease to love thee less."

"Signora ! Signora ! child ! it is time ; we must go !" said the shrill voice of Benedetta, now peering through the foliage. "The working-men pass home this way ; I see them approaching."

The lovers parted ; for the first time the serpent had penetrated into their Eden, — they had conversed, they had thought of other things than love !

CHAPTER III.

THE SITUATION OF A POPULAR PATRICIAN IN TIMES OF POPULAR DISCONTENT. — SCENE OF THE LATERAN.

THE situation of a Patrician who honestly loves the people is in those evil times when power oppresses and freedom struggles when the two divisions of men are wrestling against each other, the most irksome and perplexing that destiny can possibly contrive. Shall he take part with the nobles? — he betrays his conscience! With the people? — he deserts his friends! But that consequence of the last alternative is not the sole, nor perhaps to a strong mind the most severe. All men are swayed and chained by public opinion, — it is the public judge; but public opinion is not the same for all ranks. The public opinion that excites or deters the plebeian is the opinion of the plebeians, of those whom he sees and meets and knows; of those with whom he is brought in contact, those with whom he has mixed from childhood, those whose praises are daily heard, whose censure frowns upon him with every hour.¹ So, also, the public opinion of the great is the opinion of *their* equals, of those whom birth and accident cast forever in their way. This distinction is full of important practical deductions; it is one which, more than most maxims, should never be forgotten by a politician who desires to be profound. It is, then, an ordeal terrible to pass, which few plebeians ever

¹ It is the same in still smaller divisions. The public opinion for lawyers is that of lawyers; of soldiers, that of the army; of scholars, it is that of men of literature and science. And to the susceptible among the latter, the hostile criticism of learning has been more stinging than the severest moral censures of the vulgar. Many a man has done a great act or composed a great work solely to please the two or three persons constantly present to him. Their voice was *his* public opinion. The public opinion that operated on Bishop, the murderer, was the opinion of the Burkers, his comrades. Did that condemn him? No! He knew no other public opinion till he came to be hanged, and caught the loathing eyes and heard the hissing execrations of the crowd below his gibbet.

pass, which it is therefore unjust to expect patricians to cross unflinching, — the ordeal of opposing the public opinion which exists for *them*. They cannot help doubting their own judgment; they cannot help thinking the voice of wisdom or of virtue speaks in those sounds which have been deemed oracles from their cradle. In the tribunal of Sectarian Prejudice they imagine they recognize the Court of Universal Conscience. Another powerful antidote to the activity of a patrician so placed is in the certainty that to the last the motives of such activity will be alike misconstrued by the aristocracy he deserts and the people he joins. It seems so unnatural in a man to fly in the face of his own order that the world is willing to suppose any clew to the mystery save that of honest conviction or lofty patriotism. "Ambition!" says one. "Disappointment!" cries another. "Some private grudge!" hints a third. "Mob-courting vanity!" sneers a fourth. The people admire at first, but suspect afterwards. The moment he thwarts a popular wish, there is no redemption for him; he is accused of having acted the hypocrite, of having worn the sheep's fleece; and now, say they, "See! the wolf's teeth peep out!" Is he familiar with the people? — it is cajolery! Is he distant? — it is pride! What, then, sustains a man in such a situation, following his own conscience, with his eyes opened to all the perils of the path? Away with the cant of public opinion, away with the poor delusion of posthumous justice; he will offend the first, he will never obtain the last. What sustains him? His own soul! A man thoroughly great has a certain contempt for his kind while he aids them; their weal or woe are all; their applause, their blame, are nothing to him. He walks forth from the circle of birth and habit; he is deaf to the little motives of little men. High, through the widest space his orbit may describe, he holds on his course to guide or to enlighten; but the noises below reach him not! Until the wheel is broken, until the dark void swallow up the star, it makes melody, night and day, to its own ear; thirsting for no sound from the earth it illumines, anxious for no companionship in the path through which it rolls, conscious of its own glory, and contented, therefore, to be *alone*!

But minds of this order are rare; all ages cannot produce them. They are exceptions to the ordinary and human virtue which is influenced and regulated by external circumstance. At a time when even to be merely susceptible to the voice of fame was a great pre-eminence in moral energies over the rest of mankind, it would be impossible that any one should ever have formed the conception of that more refined and metaphysical sentiment, that purer excitement to high deeds, that glory in one's own heart, which is so immeasurably above the desire of a renown that lackeys the heels of others. In fact, before we can dispense with the world we must, by a long and severe novitiate, by the probation of much thought and much sorrow, by deep and sad conviction of the vanity of all that the world can give us, have raised ourselves, not in the fervor of an hour, but habitually, *above* the world, — an abstraction, an idealism, which in our wiser age how few even of the wisest can attain! Yet till we are thus fortunate, we know not the true divinity of contemplation, nor the all-sufficing mightiness of conscience; nor can we retreat with solemn footsteps into that Holy of Holies in our own souls wherein we know and feel how much our nature is capable of the self-existence of a God!

But to return to the things and thoughts of earth. Those considerations and those links of circumstance which in a similar situation have changed so many honest and courageous minds, changed also the mind of Adrian. He felt in a false position. His reason and conscience shared in the schemes of Rienzi, and his natural hardihood and love of enterprise would have led him actively to share the danger of their execution. But this, all his associations, his friendships, his private and household ties, loudly forbade. Against his order, against his house, against the companions of his youth, how could he plot secretly or act sternly? By the goal to which he was impelled by patriotism, stood hypocrisy and ingratitude. Who would believe him the honest champion of his country who was a traitor to his friends? Thus indeed

“The native hue of resolution

Was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,”

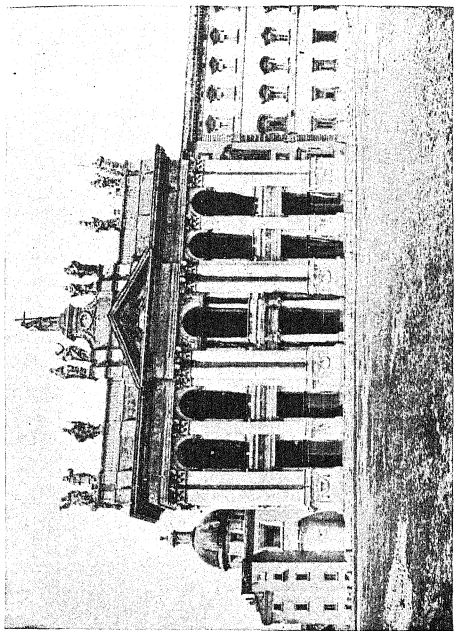
and he who should have been by nature a leader of the time

became only its spectator. Yet Adrian endeavored to console himself for his present passiveness in a conviction of the policy of his conduct. He who takes no share in the commencement of civil revolutions can often become, with the most effect, a mediator between the passions and the parties subsequently formed. Perhaps, under Adrian's circumstances, delay was really the part of a prudent statesman; the very position which cripples at the first, often gives authority before the end. Clear from the excesses, and saved from the jealousies, of rival factions, all men are willing to look with complaisance and respect to a new actor in a turbulent drama; his moderation may make him trusted by the people, his rank enable him to be a fitting mediator with the nobles; and thus the qualities that would have rendered him a martyr at one period of the revolution, raise him perhaps into a savior at another.

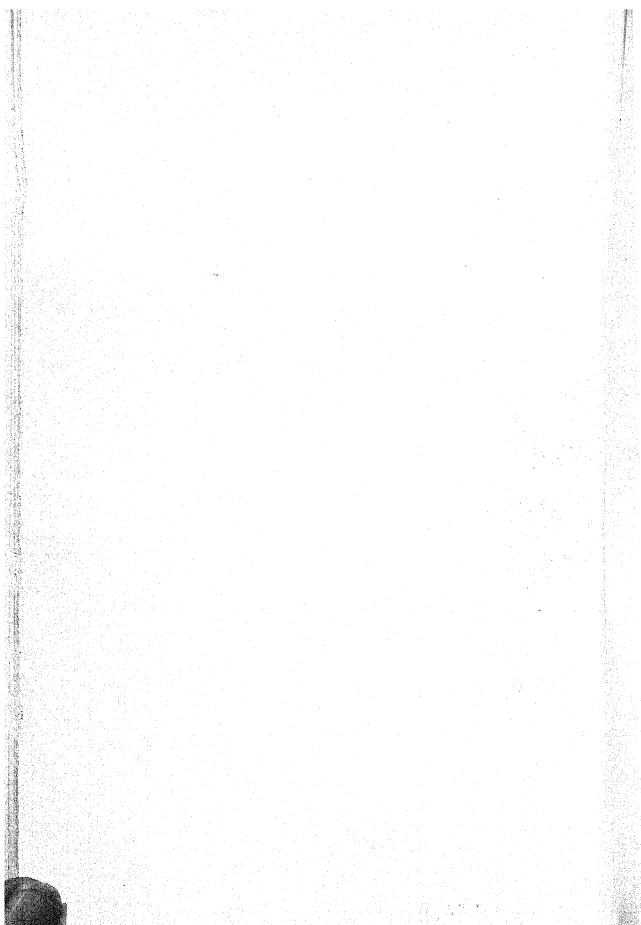
Silent, therefore, and passive, Adrian waited the progress of events. If the projects of Rienzi failed, he might by that inactivity the better preserve the people from new chains, and their champion from death. If those projects succeeded, he might equally save his house from the popular wrath, and advocating liberty, check disorder. Such, at least, were his hopes; and thus did the Italian sagacity and caution of his character control and pacify the enthusiasm of youth and courage.

The sun shone, calm and cloudless, upon the vast concourse gathered before the broad space that surrounds the church of St. John of Lateran. Partly by curiosity, partly by the desire of the Bishop of Orvietto, partly because it was an occasion in which they could display the pomp of their retinues, many of the principal Barons of Rome had gathered to this spot.

On one of the steps ascending to the church, with his mantle folded round him, stood Walter de Montreal, gazing on the various parties that, one after another, swept through the lane which the soldiers of the Church preserved unimpeded, in the middle of the crowd, for the access of the principal nobles. He watched with interest, though with his usual carelessness of air and roving glance, the different marks and looks of



ST. JOHN OF LATERAN.



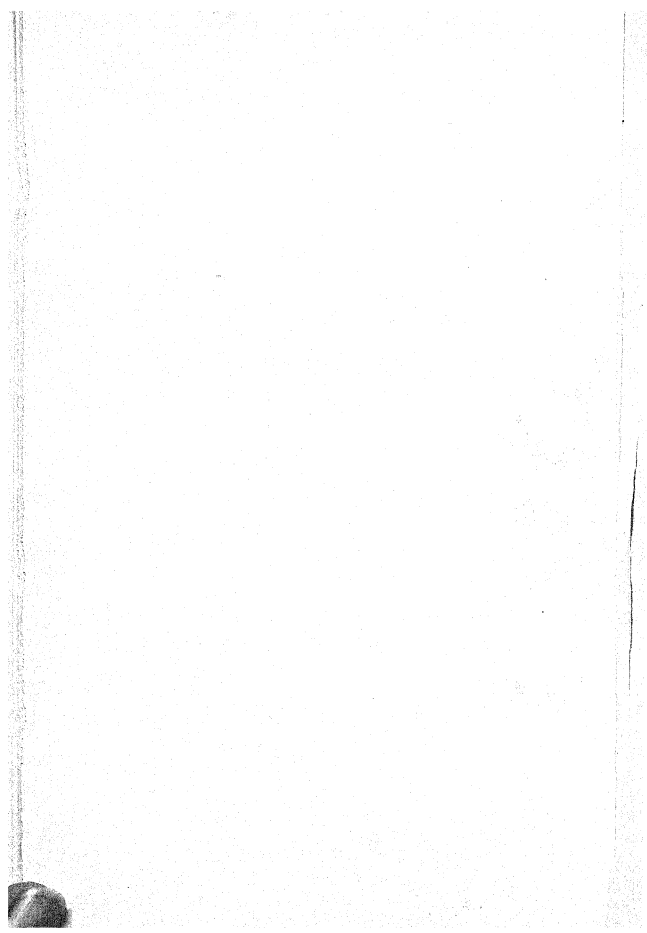
welcome given by the populace to the different personages of note. Banners and pennons preceded each Signor, and as they waved aloft, the witticisms or nicknames, the brief words of praise or censure, that imply so much, which passed to and fro among that lively crowd, were treasured carefully in his recollection.

"Make way there; way for my Lord Martino Orsini, Baron di Porto!"

"Peace, minion; draw back! Way for the Signor Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello and Knight of the Empire."

And at those two rival shouts you saw waving on high the golden bear of the Orsini, with the motto, "Beware my embrace!" and the solitary column, on an azure ground, of the Colonna, with Adrian's especial device, "Sad, but strong." The train of Martino Orsini was much more numerous than that of Adrian, which last consisted but of ten servitors. But Adrian's men attracted far greater admiration amongst the crowd, and pleased more the experienced eye of the warlike Knight of St. John. Their arms were polished like mirrors; their height was to an inch the same; their march was regular and sedate; their mien erect; they looked neither to the right nor left; they betrayed that ineffable discipline, that harmony of order, which Adrian had learned to impart to his men during his own apprenticeship of arms. But the disorderly train of the Lord of Porto was composed of men of all heights. Their arms were ill-polished and ill-fashioned, and they pressed confusedly on each other; they laughed and spoke aloud, and in their mien and bearing expressed all the insolence of men who despised alike the master they served and the people they awed. The two bands coming unexpectedly on each other through this narrow defile, the jealousy of the two houses presently declared itself. Each pressed forward for the precedence; and as the quiet regularity of Adrian's train, and even its compact paucity of numbers, enabled it to pass before the servitors of his rival, the populace set up a loud shout: "A Colonna forever!" "Let the Bear dance after the Column!"

"On, ye knaves!" said Orsini aloud to his men. "How have



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"On, ye knaves!" said Orsini aloud to his men. "How have

ye suffered this affront?" And passing himself to the head of his men, he would have advanced through the midst of his rival's train, had not a tall guard, in the Pope's livery, placed his baton in the way.

"Pardon, my lord! We have the Vicar's express commands to suffer no struggling of the different trains one with another."

"Knaves! dost thou bandy words with me?" said the fierce Orsini; and with his sword he clove the baton in two.

"In the Vicar's name, I command you to fall back!" said the sturdy guard, now placing his huge bulk in the very front of the noble's path.

"It is Cecco del Vecchio!" cried those of the populace who were near enough to perceive the interruption and its cause.

"Ay!" said one, "the good Vicar has put many of the stoutest fellows in the Pope's livery, in order the better to keep peace. He could have chosen none better than Cecco."

"But he must not fall!" cried another, as Orsini, glaring on the smith, drew back his sword as if to plunge it through his bosom.

"Shame, shame! Shall the Pope be thus insulted in his own city?" cried several voices. "Down with the sacrilegious; down!" And as if by a preconcerted plan, a whole body of the mob broke at once through the lane, and swept like a torrent over Orsini and his jostled and ill-assorted train. Orsini himself was thrown on the ground with violence, and trampled upon by a hundred footsteps; his men, huddled and struggling as much against themselves as against the mob, were scattered and overset; and when, by a great effort of the guards, headed by the smith himself, order was again restored and the line reformed, Orsini, well nigh choked with his rage and humiliation, and greatly bruised by the rude assaults he had received, could scarcely stir from the ground. The officers of the Pope raised him, and when he was on his legs he looked wildly around for his sword, which, falling from his hand, had been kicked amongst the crowd; and seeing it not, he said, between his ground teeth, to Cecco del Vecchio, —

"Fellow, thy neck shall answer this outrage, or may God

desert me!" and passed along through the space, while a half-suppressed and exultant hoot from the bystanders followed his path.

"Way there," cried the smith, "for the Lord Martino di Porto! and may all the people know that he has threatened to take my life for the discharge of my duty in obedience to the Pope's Vicar!"

"He dare not!" shouted out a thousand voices; "the people can protect their own!"

This scene had not been lost on the Provençal, who well knew how to construe the wind by the direction of straws, and saw at once, by the boldness of the populace, that they themselves were conscious of a coming tempest. "*Par Dieu*," said he, as he saluted Adrian, who, gravely and without looking behind, had now won the steps of the church, "yon tall fellow has a brave heart, and many friends too. What think you?" he added, in a low whisper: "is not this scene a proof that the nobles are less safe than they wot of?"

"The beast begins to kick against the spur, Sir Knight," answered Adrian; "a wise horseman should, in such a case, take care how he pull the rein too tight, lest the beast should rear, and he be overthrown,—yet that is the policy thou wouldst recommend."

"You mistake," returned Montreal; "my wish was to give Rome one sovereign instead of many tyrants. But hark! what means that bell?"

"The ceremony is about to begin," answered Adrian. "Shall we enter the church together?"

Seldom had a temple consecrated to God witnessed so singular a spectacle as that which now animated the solemn space of the Lateran.

In the centre of the church seats were raised in an amphitheatre, at the far end of which was a scaffolding a little higher than the rest; below this spot, but high enough to be in sight of all the concourse, was placed a vast table of iron, on which was graven an ancient inscription, and bearing in its centre a clear and prominent device, presently to be explained.

The seats were covered with cloth and rich tapestry. In the

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"Way there," cried the smith, "for the Lord Martino di Porto! and may all the people know that he has threatened to take my life for the discharge of my duty in obedience to the Pope's Vicar!"

"He dare not!" shouted out a thousand voices; "the people can protect their own!"

This scene had not been lost on the Provençal, who well knew how to construe the wind by the direction of straws, and saw at once, by the boldness of the populace, that they themselves were conscious of a coming tempest. "*Par Dieu*," said he, as he saluted Adrian, who, gravely and without looking behind, had now won the steps of the church, "yon tall fellow has a brave heart, and many friends too. What think you?" he added, in a low whisper: "is not this scene a proof that the nobles are less safe than they wot of?"

"The beast begins to kick against the spur, Sir Knight," answered Adrian; "a wise horseman should, in such a case, take care how he pull the rein too tight, lest the beast should rear, and he be overthrown,—yet that is the policy thou wouldst recommend."

"You mistake," returned Montreal; "my wish was to give Rome one sovereign instead of many tyrants. But hark! what means that bell?"

"The ceremony is about to begin," answered Adrian. "Shall we enter the church together?"

Seldom had a temple consecrated to God witnessed so singular a spectacle as that which now animated the solemn space of the Lateran.

In the centre of the church seats were raised in an amphitheatre, at the far end of which was a scaffolding a little higher than the rest; below this spot, but high enough to be in sight of all the concourse, was placed a vast table of iron, on which was graven an ancient inscription, and bearing in its centre a clear and prominent device, presently to be explained.

The seats were covered with cloth and rich tapestry. In the

rear of the church was drawn a purple curtain. Around the amphitheatre were the officers of the Church, in the party-colored liveries of the Pope. To the right of the scaffold sat Raimond, Bishop of Orvieto, in his robes of state. On the benches round him you saw all the marked personages of Rome, — the judges, the men of letters, the nobles, from the lofty rank of the Savelli to the inferior grade of a Raselli. The space beyond the amphitheatre was filled with the people, who now poured fast in, stream after stream; all the while rang, clear and loud, the great bell of the church.

At length, as Adrian and Montreal seated themselves at a little distance from Raimond, the bell suddenly ceased, the murmurs of the people were stilled, the purple curtain was withdrawn, and Rienzi came forth with slow and majestic steps. He came, but not in his usual sombre and plain attire. Over his broad breast he wore a vest of dazzling whiteness; a long robe, in the ample fashion of the toga, descended to his feet and swept the floor. On his head he wore a fold of white cloth, in the centre of which shone a golden crown. But the crown was divided, or cloven, as it were, by the mystic ornament of a silver sword, which, attracting the universal attention, testified at once that this strange garb was worn, not from the vanity of display, but for the sake of presenting to the concourse, in the person of the citizen, a type and emblem of that state of the city on which he was about to descant.

"Faith," whispered one of the old nobles to his neighbor, "the plebeian assumes it bravely."

"It will be rare sport," said a second. "I trust the good man will put some jests in his discourse."

"What showman's tricks are these?" said a third.

"He is certainly crazed!" said a fourth.

"How handsome he is!" said the women mixed with the populace.

"This is a man who has learned the people by heart," observed Montreal to Adrian. "He knows he must speak to the eye, in order to win the mind! A knave, a wise knave!"

And now Rienzi had ascended the scaffold; and as he looked long and steadfastly around the meeting, the high and thought-

ful repose of his majestic countenance, its deep and solemn gravity, hushed all the murmurs, and made its effect equally felt by the sneering nobles as the impatient populace.

"Signors of Rome," said he at length, "and ye, friends and citizens, you have heard why we are met together this day; and you, my Lord Bishop of Orvietto, and ye, fellow-laborers with me in the field of letters, ye too are aware that it is upon some matter relative to that ancient Rome, the rise and the decline of whose past power and glories we have spent our youth in endeavoring to comprehend. But this, believe me, is no vain enigma of erudition, useful but to the studious, referring but to the dead. Let the past perish; let darkness shroud it; let it sleep forever over the crumbling temples and desolate tombs of its forgotten sons, — if it cannot afford us, from its disburied secrets, a guide for the Present and the Future. What, my lords, ye have thought that it was for the sake of antiquity alone that we have wasted our nights and days in studying what antiquity can teach us? You are mistaken; it is nothing to know what we have been, unless it is with the desire of knowing that which we ought to be. Our ancestors are mere dust and ashes, save when they speak to our posterity; and then their voices resound, not from the earth below, but the heaven above. There is an eloquence in Memory, because it is the nurse of Hope. There is a sanctity in the past, but only because of the chronicles it retains, — chronicles of the progress of mankind; stepping-stone in civilization, in liberty, and in knowledge. Our fathers forbid us to recede; they teach us what is our rightful heritage; they bid us reclaim, they bid us augment, that heritage, — preserve their virtues, and avoid their errors. These are the true uses of the Past. Like the sacred edifice in which we are, it is a tomb upon which to rear a temple. I see that you marvel at this long beginning; ye look to each other, ye ask to what it tends. Behold this broad plate of iron: upon it is graven an inscription but lately disinterred from the heaps of stone and ruin which — oh, shame to Rome! — were once the palaces of empire and the arches of triumphant power. The device in the centre of the table which you behold conveys the act of the Roman Senators, who

are conferring upon Vespasian the imperial authority. It is this inscription which I have invited you to hear read! It specifies the very terms and limits of the authority thus conferred. To the Emperor was confided the power of making laws and alliances with whatsoever nation, of increasing or of diminishing the limits of towns and districts, of—mark this, my lords!—exalting men to the rank of dukes and kings,—ay, and of deposing and degrading them,—of making cities and of unmaking; in short, of all the attributes of imperial power. Yes, to that Emperor was confided this vast authority. But by whom? Heed, listen, I pray you; let not a word be lost: by whom, I say? By the Roman Senate! What was the Roman Senate? The Representative of the Roman People!”

“I knew he would come to that!” said the smith, who stood at the door with his fellows, but to whose ear, clear and distinct, rolled the silver voice of Rienzi.

“Brave fellow! and this, too, in the hearing of the lords!”

“Ay, you see what the people were, and we should never have known this but for him.”

“Peace, fellows!” said the officer to those of the crowd from whom came those whispered sentences.

Rienzi continued: “Yes, it is the people who intrusted this power; to the people, therefore, it belongs! Did the haughty Emperor arrogate the crown? Could he assume the authority of himself? Was it born with him? Did he derive it, my Lord Barons, from the possession of towered castles, of lofty lineage? No! all-powerful as he was, he had no right to one atom of that power, save from the voice and trust of the Roman people. Such, O my countrymen! such was even at that day, when Liberty was but the shadow of her former self,—such was the acknowledged prerogative of your fathers! All power was the gift of the people. What have ye to give now? Who, who, I say,—what single person, what petty chief,—asks *you* for the authority he assumes? His senate is his sword; his chart of license is written, not with ink, but blood. The people—there is *no* people! Oh! would to God that we might disentomb the spirit of the Past as easily as her records!”

"If I were your kinsman," whispered Montreal to Adrian, "I would give this man short breathing-time between his peroration and confession."

"What is your Emperor?" continued Rienzi, — "a stranger. What the great head of your Church? — an exile! Ye are without your lawful chiefs; and why? Because ye are *not* without your law-defying tyrants! The license of your nobles, their discords, their dissensions, have driven our Holy Father from the heritage of Saint Peter; they have bathed your streets in your own blood; they have wasted the wealth of your labors on private quarrels and the maintenance of hireling ruffians! Your forces are exhausted against yourselves. You have made a mockery of your country, once the mistress of the world. You have steeped her lips in gall; ye have set a crown of thorns upon her head! What, my lords!" cried he, turning sharply round towards the Savelli and Orsini, who, endeavoring to shake off the thrill which the fiery eloquence of Rienzi had stricken to their hearts, now, by contemptuous gestures and scornful smiles, testified the displeasure they did not dare loudly to utter in the presence of the Vicar and the people, — "what! even while I speak — not the sanctity of this place restrains you! I am an humble man, a citizen of Rome; but I have this distinction: I have raised against myself many foes and scoffers for that which I have done for Rome. I am hated because I love my country; I am despised because I would exalt her. I retaliate, I shall be avenged. Three traitors in your own palaces shall betray you; their names are Luxury, Envy, and Dissension!"

"There he had them on the hip!"

"Ha, ha! by the Holy Cross, that was good!"

"I would go to the hangman for such another keen stroke as that!"

"It is a shame if *we* are cowards, when one man is thus brave," said the smith.

"This is the man we have always wanted!"

"Silence!" proclaimed the officer.

"O Romans!" resumed Rienzi, passionately, "awake, I conjure you! Let this memorial of your former power, your an-

cient liberties, sink deep into your souls. In a propitious hour if ye seize it, in an evil one if ye suffer the golden opportunity to escape, has this record of the past been unfolded to your eyes. Recollect that the Jubilee approaches."

The Bishop of Orvieto smiled, and bowed approvingly; the people, the citizens, the inferior nobles, noted well those signs of encouragement; and to their minds the Pope himself, in the person of his Vicar, looked benignly on the daring of Rienzi.

"The Jubilee approaches; the eyes of all Christendom will be directed hither. Here, where from all quarters of the globe men come for peace, shall they find discord? Seeking absolution shall they perceive but crime? In the centre of God's dominion shall they weep at your weakness? In the seat of the martyred saints shall they shudder at your vices? In the fountain and source of Christ's law shall they find all law unknown? You were the glory of the world: will you be its by-word? You were its example: will you be its warning? Rise while it is yet time; clear your roads from the bandits that infest them, your walls from the hirelings that they harbor! Banish these civil discords, or the men — how proud, how great, soever — who maintain them! Pluck the scales from the hand of Fraud, the sword from the hand of Violence. The balance and the sword are the ancient attributes of Justice: restore them to *her* again! This be your high task, these be your great ends! Deem any man who opposes them a traitor to his country. Gain a victory greater than those of the Cæsars, — a victory over yourselves! Let the pilgrims of the world behold the resurrection of Rome! Make one epoch of the Jubilee of Religion and the Restoration of Law! Lay the sacrifice of your vanquished passions, the first-fruits of your renovated liberties, upon the very altar that these walls contain, and never, oh, never, since the world began, shall men have made a more grateful offering to their God!"

So intense was the sensation these words created in the audience, so breathless and overpowered did they leave the souls which they took by storm, that Rienzi had descended the scaffold and already disappeared behind the curtain from which he had emerged, ere the crowd were fully aware that he had ceased.

The singularity of this sudden apparition, robed in mysterious splendor, and vanishing the moment its errand was fulfilled, gave additional effect to the words it had uttered. The whole character of that bold address became invested with a something preternatural and inspired: to the minds of the vulgar, the mortal was converted into the oracle; and marveling at the unhesitating courage with which their idol had rebuked and conjured the haughty barons, each of whom they regarded in the light of sanctioned executioners, whose anger could be made manifest at once by the gibbet or the axe, — the people could not but superstitiously imagine that nothing less than authority from above could have gifted their leader with such hardihood, and preserved him from the danger it incurred. In fact, it was in this very courage of Rienzi that his safety consisted; he was placed in those circumstances where audacity is prudence. Had he been less bold, the nobles would have been more severe; but so great a license of speech in an officer of the Holy See, they naturally imagined, was not unauthorized by the assent of the Pope, as well as by the approbation of the people. Those who did not (like Stephen Colonna) despise words as wind, shrank back from the task of punishing one whose voice might be the mere echo of the wishes of the pontiff. The dissensions of the nobles among each other were no less favorable to Rienzi. He attacked a body, the members of which had no union.

"It is not *my* duty to slay him!" said one.

"I am not the representative of the barons!" said another.

"If Stephen Colonna heeds him not, it would be absurd, as well as dangerous, in a meaner man to make himself the champion of the order!" said a third.

The Colonna smiled approval when Rienzi denounced an Orsini, — an Orsini laughed aloud when the eloquence burst over a Colonna. The lesser nobles were well pleased to hear attacks upon both; while, on the other hand, the Bishop, by the long impunity of Rienzi, had taken courage to sanction the conduct of his fellow-officer. He affected, indeed, at times to blame the excess of his fervor, but it was always accompanied by the praises of his honesty; and the approbation of the

Pope's Vicar confirmed the impression of the nobles as to the approbation of the Pope. Thus from the very rashness of his enthusiasm had grown his security and success.

Still, however, when the barons had a little recovered from the stupor into which Rienzi had cast them, they looked round to each other; and their looks confessed their sense of the insolence of the orator, and the affront offered to themselves.

"*Per fede!*" quoth Reginaldo di Orsini, "this is past bearing; the plebeian has gone too far!"

"Look at the populace below! how they murmur and gape, and how their eyes sparkle, and what looks they bend at us!" said Luca di Savelli to his mortal enemy, Castruccio Malatesta: the sense of a common danger united in one moment, but only for a moment, the enmity of years.

"Diavolo!" muttered Raselli (Nina's father) to a baron equally poor, "but the clerk has truth in his lips. 'T is a pity he is not noble."

"What a clever brain marred!" said a Florentine merchant. "That man might be something if he were sufficiently rich."

Adrian and Montreal were silent: the first seemed lost in thought; the last was watching the various effects produced upon the audience.

"Silence!" proclaimed the officers. "Silence for my Lord Vicar."

At this announcement every eye turned to Raimond, who, rising with much clerical importance, thus addressed the assembly:—

"Although, Barons and Citizens of Rome, my well-beloved flock, and children, I, no more than yourselves, anticipated the exact nature of the address ye have just heard, and albeit I cannot feel unalloyed contentment at the manner, nor, I may say, at the whole matter of that fervent exhortation, *yet*," laying great emphasis on the last word, "I cannot suffer you to depart without adding, to the prayers of our Holy Father's servant, those also of his Holiness's spiritual representative. It is true, the Jubilee approaches! The Jubilee approaches; and yet our roads, even to the gates of Rome, are infested with murderers and godless ruffians! What pilgrim can ven-

ture across the Apennines to worship at the altars of St. Peter? The Jubilee approaches: what scandal shall it be to Rome if these shrines be without pilgrims, if the timid recoil from, if the bold fall victims to, the dangers of the way! Wherefore I pray you all, citizens and chiefs alike, I pray you all to lay aside those unhappy dissensions which have so long consumed the strength of our sacred city, and, uniting with each other in the ties of amity and brotherhood, to form a blessed league against the marauders of the road. I see amongst you, my lords, many of the boasts and pillars of the state; but alas! I think with grief and dismay on the causeless and idle hatred that has grown up between you, — a scandal to our city, and reflecting, let me add, my lords, no honor on your faith as Christians, nor on your dignity as defenders of the Church."

Amongst the inferior nobles, along the seats of the judges and the men of letters, through the vast concourse of the people, ran a loud murmur of approbation at these words. The greater barons looked proudly, but not contemptuously, at the countenance of the prelate, and preserved a strict and unrevealing silence.

"In this holy spot," continued the Bishop, "let me beseech you to bury those fruitless animosities which have already cost enough of blood and treasure, and let us quit these walls with one common determination to evince our courage and display our chivalry only against our universal foes, — those ruffians who lay waste our fields and infest our public ways; the foes alike of the people we should protect and the God whom we should serve!"

The Bishop resumed his seat; the nobles looked at each other without reply; the people began to whisper loudly among themselves; when, after a short pause, Adrian di Castello rose: —

"Pardon me, my lords, and you, reverend Father, if I, inexperienced in years and of little mark or dignity amongst you, presume to be the first to embrace the proposal we have just heard. Willingly do I renounce all ancient cause of enmity with any of my compeers. Fortunately for me, my long absence from Rome has swept from my remembrance the feuds

and rivalries familiar to my early youth; and in this noble conclave I see but one man," glancing at Martino di Porto, who sat sullenly looking down, "against whom I have at any time deemed it a duty to draw my sword: the gage that I once cast to that noble is yet, I rejoice to think, unredeemed. I withdraw it. Henceforth my only foes shall be the foes of Rome!"

"Nobly spoken!" said the Bishop, aloud.

"And," continued Adrian, casting down his glove amongst the nobles, "I throw, my lords, the gage, thus resumed, amongst you all, in challenge to a wider rivalry and a more noble field. I invite any man to vie with me in the zeal that he shall show to restore tranquillity to our roads and order to our state. It is a contest in which, if I be vanquished with reluctance, I will yield the prize without envy. In ten days from this time, reverend Father, I will raise forty horsemen-at-arms, ready to obey whatever orders shall be agreed upon for the security of the Roman state. And you, O Romans, dismiss, I pray you, from your minds those eloquent invectives against your fellow-citizens which ye have lately heard. All of us, of what rank soever, may have shared in the excesses of these unhappy times; let us endeavor not to avenge nor to imitate, but to reform and to unite. And may the people hereafter find that the true boast of a patrician is that his power the better enables him to serve his country!"

"Brave words!" quoth the smith, sneeringly.

"If they were all like him!" said the smith's neighbor.

"He has helped the nobles out of a dilemma," said Pandulfo.

"He has shown gray wit under young hairs," said an aged Malatesta.

"You have turned the tide, but not stemmed it, noble Adrian," whispered the ever-boding Montreal, as, amidst the murmurs of the general approbation, the young Colonna resumed his seat.

"How mean you?" said Adrian.

"That your soft words, like all patrician conciliations, have come too late."

Not another noble stirred, though they felt perhaps dis-

posed to join in the general feeling of amnesty, and appeared, by signs and whispers, to applaud the speech of Adrian. They were too habituated to the ungracefulness of an unlettered pride to bow themselves to address conciliating language either to the people or their foes. And Raimond, glancing round, and not willing that their unseemly silence should be long remarked, rose at once, to give it the best construction in his power:—

“My son, thou hast spoken as a patriot and a Christian; by the approving silence of your peers we all feel that they share your sentiments. Break we up the meeting; its end is obtained. The manner of our proceeding against the leagued robbers of the road requires maturer consideration elsewhere. This day shall be an epoch in our history.”

“It shall,” quoth Cecco del Vecchio, gruffly, between his teeth.

“Children, my blessing upon you all!” concluded the Vicar, spreading his arms.

And in a few minutes more the crowd poured from the church. The different servitors and flag-bearers ranged themselves on the steps without, each train anxious for their master’s precedence; and the nobles, gravely collecting in small knots, in the which was no mixture of rival blood, followed the crowd down the aisles. Soon rose again the din and the noise and the wrangling and the oaths of the hostile bands, as, with pain and labor, the Vicar’s officers marshalled them in “order most disorderly.”

But so true were Montreal’s words to Adrian that the populace already half forgot the young noble’s generous appeal, and were only bitterly commenting on the ungracious silence of his brother lords. What, too, to them was this crusade against the robbers of the road? They blamed the good Bishop for not saying boldly to the nobles: “Ye are the first robbers we must march against!” The popular discontents had gone far beyond palliatives; they had arrived at that point when the people longed less for reform than change. There are times when a revolution cannot be warded off; it must come, — come alike by resistance or by concession. Woe to that race in

which a revolution produces no fruits; in which the thunder-bolt smites the high place, but does not purify the air! To suffer in vain is often the lot of the noblest individuals; but when a People suffer in vain, let them curse themselves!

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMBITIOUS CITIZEN, AND THE AMBITIOUS SOLDIER.

THE Bishop of Orvieto lingered last, to confer with Rienzi, who awaited him in the recesses of the Lateran. Raimond had the penetration not to be seduced into believing that the late scene could effect any reformation amongst the nobles, heal their divisions, or lead them actively against the infestors of the Campagna. But as he detailed to Rienzi all that had occurred subsequent to the departure of that hero of the scene, he concluded with saying:—

“You will perceive from this, one good result will be produced: the first armed dissension, the first fray among the nobles, will seem like a breach of promise, and to the people and to the Pope, a reasonable excuse for despairing of all amendment amongst the Barons,—an excuse which will sanction the efforts of the first, and the approval of the last.”

“For such a fray we shall not long wait,” answered Rienzi.

“I believe the prophecy,” answered Raimond, smiling; “at present all runs well. Go you with us homeward?”

“Nay, I think it better to tarry here till the crowd is entirely dispersed; for if they were to see me, in their present excitement, they might insist on some rash and hasty enterprise. Besides, my lord,” added Rienzi, “with an ignorant people, however honest and enthusiastic, this rule must be rigidly observed,—stale not your presence by custom. Never may men like me, who have no external rank, appear amongst the crowd, save on those occasions when the mind is itself a rank.”

"That is true, as you have no train," answered Raimond, thinking of his own well-liveried menials. "Adieu, then; we shall meet soon!"

"Ay, at Philippi, my lord. Reverend Father, your blessing!"

It was some time subsequent to this conference that Rienzi quitted the sacred edifice. As he stood on the steps of the church — now silent and deserted — the hour that precedes the brief twilight of the South lent its magic to the view. There he beheld the sweeping arches of the mighty Aqueduct extending far along the scene, and backed by the distant and purpled hills. Before, to the right, rose the gate which took its Roman name from the Cœlian Mount, at whose declivity it yet stands. Beyond — from the height of the steps — he saw the villages scattered through the gray Campagna, whitening in the sloped sun; and in the farthest distance the mountain shadows began to darken over the roofs of the ancient Tusculum, and the second Alban¹ city, which yet rises, in desolate neglect, above the vanished palaces of Pompey and Domitian.

The Roman stood absorbed and motionless for some moments, gazing on the scene and inhaling the sweet balm of the mellow air. It was the soft spring-time, — the season of flowers and green leaves and whispering winds, — the pastoral May of Italia's poets; but hushed was the voice of song on the banks of the Tiber, the reeds gave music no more. From the sacred Mount in which Saturn held his home, the Dryad and the Nymph and Italy's native Sylvan were gone forever. Rienzi's original nature, — its enthusiasm, its veneration for the past, its love of the beautiful and the great, that very attachment to the graces and pomp which give so florid a character to the harsh realities of life, and which power afterwards too luxuriantly developed; the exuberance of thoughts and fancies, which poured itself from his lips in so brilliant and inexhaustible a flood, — all bespoke those intellectual and imaginative biasses which, in calmer times, might have raised him in litera-

¹ The first Alba — the Alba Longa — whose origin Fable ascribes to Ascanius, was destroyed by Tullus Hostilius. The second Alba, or modern Albano, was erected on the plain below the ancient town, a little before the time of Nero.

ture to a more indisputable eminence than that to which action can ever lead; and something of such consciousness crossed his spirit at that moment.

"Happier had it been for me," thought he, "had I never looked out from my own heart upon the world. I had all within me that makes contentment of the present, because I had that which can make me forget the present. I had the power to re-people, to create; the legends and dreams of old, the divine faculty of verse, in which the beautiful superfluities of the heart can pour themselves,—these were mine! Petrarch chose wisely for himself! To address the world, but from without the world; to persuade, to excite, to command, for these are the aim and glory of ambition: but to shun its tumult and its toil! His the quiet cell which he fills with the shapes of beauty; the solitude, from which he can banish the evil times whereon we are fallen, but in which he can dream back the great hearts and the glorious epochs of the past. For me,—to what cares I am wedded; to what labors I am bound; what instruments I must use; what disguises I must assume; to tricks and artifice I must bow my pride! Base are my enemies, uncertain my friends; and verily, in this struggle with blinded and mean men, the soul itself becomes warped and dwarfish. Patient and darkling, the Means creep through caves and the soiling mire, to gain at last the light which is the End."

In these reflections there was a truth, the whole gloom and sadness of which the Roman had not yet experienced. However august be the object we propose to ourselves, every less worthy path we take to insure it distorts the mental sight of our ambition; and the means, by degrees, abase the end to their own standard. This is the true misfortune of a man nobler than his age,—that the instruments he must use soil himself: half he reforms his times; but half, too, the times will corrupt the reformer. His own craft undermines his safety; the people, whom he himself accustoms to a false excitement, perpetually crave it; and when their ruler ceases to seduce their fancy, he falls their victim. The reform he makes by these means is hollow and momentary, it is swept

away with himself; it was but the trick, the show, the wasted genius of a conjuror: the curtain falls, the magic is over, the cup and balls are kicked aside. Better one slow step in enlightenment—which, being made by the reason of a whole people, cannot recede—than these sudden flashes in the depth of the general night which the darkness, by contrast doubly dark, swallows up everlastingly again!

As, slowly and musingly, Rienzi turned to quit the church, he felt a light touch upon his shoulder.

"Fair evening to you, Sir Scholar!" said a frank voice.

"To you I return the courtesy," answered Rienzi, gazing upon the person who thus suddenly accosted him, and in whose white cross and martial bearing the reader recognizes the Knight of St. John.

"You know me not, I think?" said Montreal. "But that matters little; we may easily commence our acquaintance,—for me, indeed, I am fortunate enough to have made myself already acquainted with you."

"Possibly we have met elsewhere, at the house of one of those nobles to whose rank you seem to belong?"

"Belong? no, not exactly!" returned Montreal, proudly. "High-born and great as your magnates deem themselves, I would not, while the mountains can yield one free spot for my footstep, change my place in the world's many grades for theirs. To the brave there is but one sort of plebeian, and that is the coward. But you, sage Rienzi," continued the Knight, in a gayer tone, "I have seen in more stirring scenes than the hall of a Roman Baron."

Rienzi glanced keenly at Montreal, who met his eye with an open brow.

"Yes!" resumed the Knight—"but let us walk on; suffer me for a few moments to be your companion. Yes! I have listened to you,—the other eve, when you addressed the populace, and to-day, when you rebuked the nobles; and at midnight, too, not long since, when (your ear, fair Sir!—lower, it is a secret!)—at midnight, too, when you administered the oath of brotherhood to the bold conspirators on the ruined Aventine!"

As he concluded, the Knight drew himself aside, to watch upon Rienzi's countenance the effect which his words might produce.

A slight tremor passed over the frame of the conspirator, — for so, unless the conspiracy succeed, would Rienzi be termed, by others than Montreal; he turned abruptly round to confront the Knight, and placed his hand involuntarily on his sword; but presently relinquished the grasp.

"Ha!" said the Roman, slowly, "if this be true, fall Rome! There is treason even among the free!"

"No treason, brave Sir!" answered Montreal; "I possess thy secret, but none have betrayed it to me."

"And is it as friend, or foe, that thou hast learned it?"

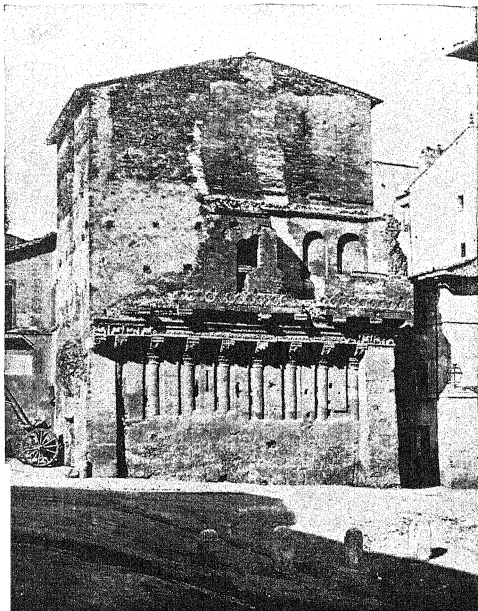
"That as it may be," returned Montreal, carelessly. "Enough, at present, that I could send thee to the gibbet, if I said but the word, to show my power to be thy foe; enough that I have not done it, to prove my disposition to be thy friend."

"Thou mistakest, stranger; that man does not live who could shed my blood in the streets of Rome! The gibbet! Little dost thou know of the power which surrounds Rienzi."

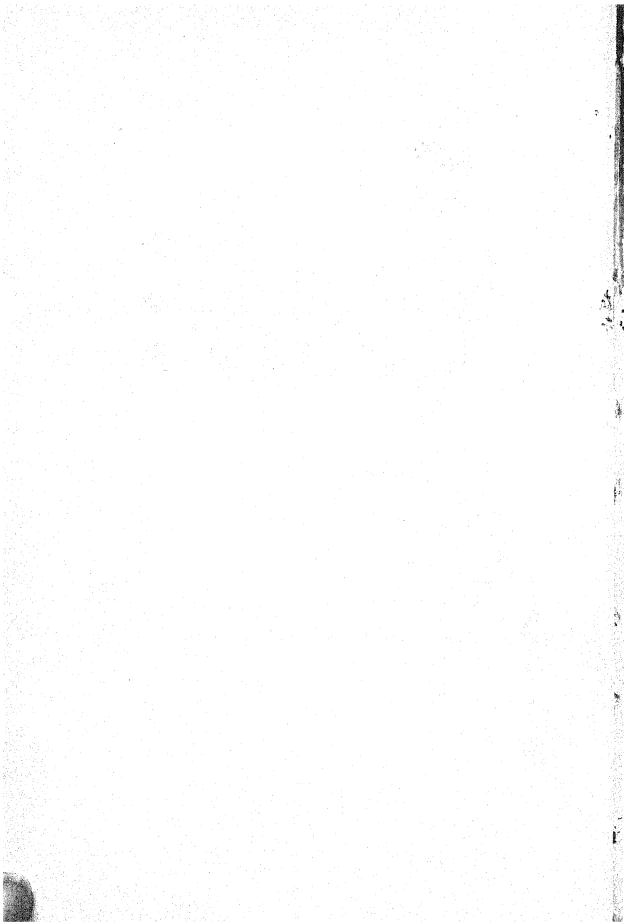
These words were said with some scorn and bitterness; but after a moment's pause Rienzi resumed, more calmly, —

"By the cross on thy mantle, thou belongest to one of the proudest orders of knighthood; thou art a foreigner, and a cavalier. What generous sympathies can convert thee into a friend of the Roman people?"

"Cola di Rienzi," returned Montreal, "the sympathies that unite us are those which unite all men who by their own efforts rise above the herd. True, I was born noble, but powerless and poor; at my beck now move, from city to city, the armed instruments of authority: my breath is the law of thousands. This empire I have not inherited; I won it by a cool brain and a fearless arm. Know me for Walter de Montreal: is it not a name that speaks a spirit kindred to thine own? Is not ambition a common sentiment between us? I do not marshal soldiers for gain only, though men



HOUSE OF COLA DI RIENZI.



have termed me avaricious, nor butcher peasants for the love of blood, though men have called me cruel. Arms and wealth are the sinews of power: it is power that I desire. Thou, bold Rienzi, strugglest thou not for the same? Is it the rank breath of the garlic-chewing mob, is it the whispered envy of schoolmen, is it the hollow mouthing of boys who call thee patriot and freeman — words to trick the ear — that will content thee? These are but *thy* instruments to *power*. Have I spoken truly?"

Whatever distaste Rienzi might conceive at this speech he masked effectually. "Certes," said he, "it would be in vain, renowned Captain, to deny that I seek but that power of which thou speakest. But what union can there be between the ambition of a Roman citizen and the leader of paid armies that take their cause only according to their hire, — to-day fight for liberty in Florence, to-morrow for tyranny in Bologna? Pardon my frankness; for in this age that is deemed no disgrace which I impute to thy armies. Valor and generalship are held to consecrate any cause they distinguish; and he who is the master of princes may be well honored by them as their equal."

"We are entering into a less deserted quarter of the town," said the Knight: "is there no secret place, no Aventine, in this direction, where we can confer?"

"Hush!" replied Rienzi, cautiously looking round. "I thank thee, noble Montreal, for the hint; nor may it be well for us to be seen together. Wilt thou deign to follow me to my home by the Palatine Bridge?¹ There we can converse undisturbed and secure."

"Be it so," said Montreal, falling back.

With a quick and hurried step, Rienzi passed through the town, in which, wherever he was discovered, the scattered

¹ The picturesque ruins shown at this day as having once been the habitation of the celebrated Cola di Rienzi were long asserted by the antiquaries to have belonged to another Cola, or Nicola. I believe, however, that the dispute has been lately decided, — and, indeed, no one but an antiquary, and that a Roman one, could suppose that there were two Colas to whom the inscription on the house would apply.

citizens saluted him with marked respect; and turning through a labyrinth of dark alleys, as if to shun the more public thoroughfares, arrived at length at a broad space near the river. The first stars of night shone down on the ancient temple of Fortuna Virilis, which the chances of Time had already converted into the Church of St. Mary of Egypt; and facing the twice-hallowed edifice stood the house of Rienzi.

"It is a fair omen to have my mansion facing the ancient Temple of Fortune," said Rienzi, smiling, as Montreal followed the Roman into the chamber I have already described.

"Yet Valor need never pray to Fortune," said the Knight; "the first commands the last."

Long was the conference between these two men, the most enterprising of their age. Meanwhile, let me make the reader somewhat better acquainted with the character and designs of Montreal than the hurry of events has yet permitted him to become.

Walter de Montreal, generally known in the chronicles of Italy by the designation of Fra Moreale, had passed into Italy — a bold adventurer, worthy to become a successor of those roving Normans (from one of the most eminent of whom, by the mother's side, he claimed descent) who had formerly played so strange a part in the chivalric errantry of Europe — realizing the fables of Amadis and Palmerin (each knight in himself a host), winning territories and oversetting thrones, acknowledging no laws save those of knighthood, never confounding themselves with the tribes amongst which they settled, incapable of becoming citizens, and scarcely contented with aspiring to be kings. At that time Italy was the India of all those well-born and penniless adventurers who, like Montreal, had inflamed their imagination by the ballads and legends of the Roberts and the Godfreys of old, who had trained themselves from youth to manage the barb, and bear through the heat of summer the weight of arms, and who, passing into an effeminate and distracted land, had only to exhibit bravery in order to command wealth. It was considered no disgrace for some powerful chieftain to collect together a band of these hardy aliens, to subsist amidst the mountains on

booty and pillage, to make war upon tyrant or republic as interest suggested, and to sell, at enormous stipends, the immunities of peace. Sometimes they hired themselves to one state to protect it against the other; and the next year beheld them in the field against their former employers. These bands of Northern stipendiaries assumed, therefore, a civil as well as a military importance; they were as indispensable to the safety of one state as they were destructive to the security of all. But five years before the present date, the Florentine Republic had hired the services of a celebrated leader of these foreign soldiers, — Gualtier, Duke of Athens. By acclamation the people themselves had elected that warrior to the state of prince, or tyrant, of their State; before the year was completed they revolted against his cruelties, or rather against his exactions, — for, despite all the boasts of their historians, they felt an attack on their purses more deeply than an assault on their liberties, — they had chased him from their city, and once more proclaimed themselves a Republic. The bravest and most favored of the soldiers of the Duke of Athens had been Walter de Montreal; he had shared the rise and the downfall of his chief. Amongst popular commotions, the acute and observant mind of the Knight of St. John had learned no mean civil experience, — he had learned to sound a people, to know how far they would endure, to construe the signs of revolution, to be a reader of the times. After the downfall of the Duke of Athens as a Free Companion, in other words a Freebooter, Montreal had augmented under the fierce Werner his riches and his renown. At present without employment worth, his spirit of enterprise and intrigue, the disordered and chiefless state of Rome had attracted him thither. In the league he had proposed to Colonna, in the suggestions he had made to the vanity of that Signor, his own object was to render his services indispensable, — to constitute himself the head of the soldiery whom his proposed designs would render necessary to the ambition of the Colonna, could it be excited; and in the vastness of his hardy genius for enterprise he probably saw that the command of such a force would be in reality command of Rome: a counter-revolution might easily

the Colonna and elect himself to the principality. It had sometimes been the custom of Roman, as of other Italian States, to prefer for a chief magistrate, under the title of *Podesta*, a foreigner to a native. And Montreal hoped that he might possibly become to Rome what the Duke of Athens had been to Florence, — an ambition he knew well enough to be above the gentleman of Provence, but not above the leader of an army. But, as we have already seen, his sagacity perceived at once that he could not move the aged head of the patricians to those hardy and perilous measures which were necessary to the attainment of supreme power. Contented with his present station, and taught moderation by his age and his past reverses, Stephen Colonna was not the man to risk a scaffold from the hope to gain a throne. The contempt which the old patrician professed for the people and their idol also taught the deep-thinking Montreal that if the Colonna possessed not the ambition, neither did he possess the policy, requisite for empire. The Knight found his caution against Rienzi in vain, and he turned to Rienzi himself. Little cared the Knight of St. John which party were uppermost, prince or people, so that his own objects were attained, — in fact, he had studied the humors of a people, not in order to serve, but to rule them; and believing all men actuated by a similar ambition, he imagined that, whether a demagogue or a patrician reigned, the people were equally to be victims, and that the cry of "Order" on the one hand, or of "Liberty" on the other, was but the mere pretext by which the energy of one man sought to justify his ambition over the herd. Deeming himself one of the most honorable spirits of his age, he believed in no honor which *he* was unable to feel; and, sceptic in virtue, was therefore credulous of vice.

But the boldness of his own nature inclined him perhaps rather to the adventurous Rienzi than to the self-complacent Colonna; and he considered that to the safety of the first he and his armed minions might be even more necessary than to that of the last. At present his main object was to learn from Rienzi the exact strength which he possessed, and how far he was prepared for any actual revolt.

The acute Roman took care, on the one hand, how he betrayed to the Knight more than he yet knew, or disgusted him by apparent reserve on the other. Crafty as Montreal was, he possessed not that wonderful art of mastering others which was so pre-eminently the gift of the eloquent and profound Rienzi, and the difference between the grades of their intellect was visible in their present conference.

"I see," said Rienzi, "that amidst all the events which have lately smiled upon my ambition, none is so favorable as that which assures me of your countenance and friendship. In truth, I require some armed alliance. Would you believe it? Our friends, so bold in private meetings, yet shrink from a public explosion. They fear not the patricians, but the soldiery of the patricians; for it is the remarkable feature in the Italian courage that they have no terror for each other, but the casque and sword of a foreign hireling make them quail like deer."

"They will welcome gladly, then, the assurance that such hirelings shall be in their service, — not against them; and as many as you desire for the revolution, so many shall you receive."

"But the pay and the conditions," said Rienzi, with his dry, sarcastic smile. "How shall we arrange the first, and what shall we hold to be the second?"

"That is an affair easily concluded," replied Montreal. "For me, to tell you frankly, the glory and excitement of so great a revulsion would alone suffice. I like to feel myself necessary to the completion of high events. For my men it is otherwise. Your first act will be to seize the revenues of the state. Well, whatever they amount to, the product of the first year, great or small, shall be divided amongst us. You the one half, and I and my men the other half."

"It is much," said Rienzi, gravely, and as if in calculation; "but Rome cannot purchase her liberties too dearly. So be it then decided."

"Amen! And now, then, what is your force? for these eighty or a hundred signors of the Aventine — worthy men, doubtless — scarce suffice for a revolt!"

Gazing cautiously round the room, the Roman placed his hand on Montreal's arm, —

"Between you and me, it requires time to cement it. We shall be unable to stir these five weeks. I have too rashly anticipated the period. The corn is indeed cut, but I must now, by private adjuration and address, bind up the scattered sheaves."

"Five weeks," repeated Montreal; "that is far longer than I anticipated."

"What I desire," continued Rienzi, fixing his searching eyes upon Montreal, "is, that in the meanwhile we should preserve a profound calm, we should remove every suspicion. I shall bury myself in my studies, and convoke no more meetings."

"Well —"

"And for yourself, noble Knight, might I venture to dictate, I would pray you to mix with the nobles, to profess for me and for the people the profoundest contempt, and to contribute to rock them yet more in the cradle of their false security. Meanwhile, you could quietly withdraw as many of the armed mercenaries as you influence from Rome, and leave the nobles without their only defenders. Collecting these hardy warriors in the recesses of the mountains, a day's march from hence, we may be able to summon them at need, and they shall appear at our gates and in the midst of our rising, — hailed as deliverers by the nobles, but in reality allies with the people. In the confusion and despair of our enemies at discovering their mistake, they will fly from the city."

"And its revenue and its empire will become the appanage of the hardy soldier and the intriguing demagogue!" cried Montreal, with a laugh.

"Sir Knight, the division shall be equal."

"Agreed!"

"And now, noble Montreal, a flask of our best vintage!" said Rienzi, changing his tone.

"You know the Provençals," answered Montreal, gayly.

The wine was brought, the conversation became free and familiar, and Montreal, whose craft was acquired, and whose frankness was natural, unwittingly committed his secret pro-

jects and ambition more nakedly to Rienzi, than he had designed to do. They parted apparently the best of friends.

"By the way," said Rienzi, as they drained the last goblet, "Stephen Colonna betakes him to Corneto, with a convoy of corn, on the 19th. Will it not be as well if you join him? You can take that opportunity to whisper discontent to the mercenaries that accompany him on his mission, and induce them to our plan."

"I thought of that before," returned Montreal; "it shall be done. For the present, farewell !

"His barb and his sword,
And his lady the peerless,
Are all that are prized
By Orlando the fearless.

"Success to the Norman,
The darling of story ;
His glory is pleasure,
His pleasure is glory.' "

Chanting this rude ditty as he resumed his mantle, the Knight waved his hand to Rienzi and departed.

Rienzi watched the receding form of his guest with an expression of hate and fear upon his countenance. "Give that man the power," he muttered, "and he may be a second Totila.¹ Methinks I see, in his griping and ferocious nature, through all the gloss of its gayety and knightly grace, the very personification of our old Gothic foes. I trust I have lulled him ! Verily, two suns could no more blaze in one hemisphere than Walter de Montreal and Cola di Rienzi live in the same city. The star-seers tell us that we feel a secret and uncontrollable antipathy to those whose astral influences destine them to work us evil ; such antipathy do I feel for yon fair-faced homicide. Cross not my path, Montreal ; cross not my path !"

With this soliloquy Rienzi turned within, and, retiring to his apartment, was seen no more that night.

¹ Innocent VI., some years afterwards, proclaimed Montreal to be *worse* than Totila.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROCESSION OF THE BARONS — THE BEGINNING OF
THE END.

It was the morning of the 19th of May; the air was brisk and clear, and the sun, which had just risen, shone cheerily upon the glittering casques and spears of a gallant procession of armed horsemen, sweeping through the long and principal street of Rome. The neighing of the horses, the ringing of the hoofs, the dazzle of the armor, and the tossing to and fro of the standards, adorned with the proud insignia of the Colonna, presented one of the gay and brilliant spectacles peculiar to the Middle Ages.

At the head of the troop, on a stout palfrey, rode Stephen Colonna. At his right was the Knight of Provence, curbing, with an easy hand, a slight but fiery steed of the Arab race; behind him followed two squires, the one leading his war horse, the other bearing his lance and helmet. At the left of Stephen Colonna rode Adrian, grave and silent, and replying only by monosyllables to the gay bavardage of the Knight of Provence. A considerable number of the flower of the Roman nobles followed the old baron, and the train was closed by a serried troop of foreign horsemen completely armed.

There was no crowd in the street; the citizens looked with seeming apathy at the procession from their half-closed shops.

"Have these Romans no passion for shows?" asked Montreal. "If they could be more easily amused, they would be more easily governed."

"Oh! Rienzi and such buffoons amuse them. We do better, — we terrify!" replied Stephen.

"What sings the troubadour, Lord Adrian?" said Montreal,

"Smiles, false smiles, should form the school
For those who rise and those who rule.
The brave they trick, the fair subdue,
Kings deceive, and States undo, —
Smiles, false smiles!

“Frowns, true frowns, ourselves betray,
The brave arouse, the fair dismay,
Sting the pride which blood must heal,
Mix the bowl and point the steel.
Frowns, true frowns !”

The lay is of France, Signor, yet methinks it brings its wisdom from Italy; for the serpent-smile is your countrymen's proper distinction, and the frown ill becomes them.”

“Sir Knight,” replied Adrian, sharply, and incensed at the taunt, “you foreigners have taught us how to frown,—a virtue sometimes.”

“But not wisdom, unless the hand could maintain what the brow menaced,” returned Montreal with haughtiness; for he had much of the Frank vivacity, which often overcame his prudence; and he had conceived a secret pique against Adrian since their interview at Stephen's palace.

“Sir Knight,” answered Adrian, coloring, “our conversation may lead to warmer words than I would desire to have with one who has rendered me so gallant a service.”

“Nay, then, let us go back to the troubadours,” said Montreal, indifferently. “Forgive me if I do not think highly, in general, of Italian honor or Italian valor. *Your* valor I acknowledge, for I have witnessed it, and valor and honor go together; let that suffice!”

As Adrian was about to answer, his eye fell suddenly on the burly form of Cecco del Vecchio, who was leaning his bare and brawny arms over his anvil, and gazing with a smile upon the group. There was something in that smile which turned the current of Adrian's thoughts, and which he could not contemplate without an unaccountable misgiving.

“A strong villain that,” said Montreal, also eying the smith. “I should like to enlist him. Fellow!” cried he, aloud, “you have an arm that were as fit to wield the sword as to fashion it. Desert your anvil, and follow the fortunes of Fra Moreale!”

The smith nodded his head. “Signor Cavalier,” said he, gravely, “we poor men have no passion for war. We want not to kill others, we desire only ourselves to live,—if you will let us!”

"By the Holy Mother, a slavish answer! But you Romans —"

"*Are slaves!*" interrupted the smith, turning away to the interior of his forge.

"The dog is mutinous!" said the old Colonna. And as the band swept on, the rude foreigners, encouraged by their leaders, had each some taunt or jest, uttered in a barbarous attempt at the Southern *patois*, for the lazy giant, as he again appeared in front of his forge, leaning on his anvil as before, and betraying no sign of attention to his insulters, save by a heightened glow of his swarthy visage; and so the gallant procession passed through the streets, and quitted the Eternal City.

There was a long interval of deep silence, of general calm, throughout the whole of Rome; the shops were still but half-opened, no man betook himself to his business; it was like the commencement of some holiday, when indolence precedes enjoyment.

About noon a few small knots of men might be seen scattered about the streets, whispering to each other, but soon dispersing; and every now and then a single passenger, generally habited in the long robes used by the men of letters, or in the more sombre garb of monks, passed hurriedly up the street towards the Church of St. Mary of Egypt, once the Temple of Fortune. Then again all was solitary and deserted. Suddenly there was heard *the sound of a single trumpet!* It swelled, it gathered on the ear. Cecco del Vecchio looked up from his anvil! *A solitary horseman* paced slowly by the forge, and wound a long loud blast of the trumpet suspended round his neck as he passed through the middle of the street. Then might you see a crowd suddenly, and as by magic, appear emerging from every corner; the street became thronged with multitudes: but it was only by the tramp of their feet and an indistinct and low murmur that they broke the silence. Again the horseman wound his trump, and when the note ceased he cried aloud: "Friends and Romans! to-morrow, at dawn of day, let each man find himself unarmed before the Church of St. Angelo. Cola di Rienzi convenes the Romans to provide

for the good state of Rome." A shout, that seemed to shake the bases of the seven hills, broke forth at the end of this brief exhortation; the horseman rode slowly on, and the crowd followed. This was the commencement of the Revolution.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSPIRATOR BECOMES THE MAGISTRATE.

AT midnight, when the rest of the city seemed hushed in rest, lights were streaming from the windows of the Church of St. Angelo. Breaking from its echoing aisles, the long and solemn notes of sacred music stole at frequent intervals upon the air. Rienzi was praying within the church; thirty masses consumed the hours from night till morn, and all the sanction of religion was invoked to consecrate the enterprise of liberty.¹ The sun had long risen, and the crowd had long been assembled before the church door and in vast streams along every street that led to it, when the bell of the church tolled out long and merrily; and as it ceased, the voices of the choristers within chanted the following hymn, in which were somewhat strikingly, though barbarously, blended the spirit of the classic patriotism with the fervor of religious zeal:—

THE ROMAN HYMN OF LIBERTY.

Let the mountains exult around!²
 On her seven-hill'd throne renown'd,
 Once more old Rome is crown'd!
 Jubilate!

¹ In fact, I apprehend that if ever the life of Cola di Rienzi shall be written by a hand worthy of the task, it will be shown that a strong religious feeling was blended with the political enthusiasm of the people, — the religious feeling of a premature and crude reformation, the legacy of Arnold of Brescia. It was not, however, one excited against the priests, but favored by them. The principal conventual orders declared for the Revolution.

² "Exultent in circuito vestro montes," etc. Let the mountains exult around! So begins Rienzi's letter to the Senate and Roman people; preserved by Hocsemius.

RIENZI:

Sing out, O Vale and Wave!
Look up from each laurell'd grave,
Bright dust of the deathless brave!
Jubilate!

Pale Vision, what art thou ? Lo,
From Time's dark deeps,
Like a wind, It sweeps,
Like a Wind, when the tempests blow :

A shadowy form, as a giant ghost,
It stands in the midst of the armed host !
The dead man's shroud on Its awful limbs,
And the gloom of Its presence the daylight dims,
And the trembling world looks on aghast :
All hail to the SOUL OF THE MIGHTY PAST !
Hail ! all hail !

As we speak, as we hallow, It moves, It breathes ;
From its clouded crest bud the laurel-wreaths ;
As a Sun that leaps up from the arms of Night,
The shadow takes shape, and the gloom takes light.
Hail ! all hail !

THE SOUL OF THE PAST again
To its ancient home,
In the hearts of Rome,
Hath come to resume its reign!

O Fame, with a prophet's voice,
 Bid the ends of the Earth rejoice !
 Wherever the Proud are Strong,
 And Right is oppress'd by Wrong ;
 Wherever the day dim shines
 Through the cell where the captive pines,
 Go forth, with a trumpet's sound,
 And tell to the Nations round —
 On the Hills which the Heroes trod,
 In the shrines of the Saints of God,
 In the Casars' hall and the Martyrs' prison —
 That the slumber is broke and the Sleeper arisen ;
 That the reign of the Goth and the Vandal is o'er ;
 And Earth feels the tread of THE ROMAN once more !

As the hymn ended, the gate of the church opened, the crowd gave way on either side, and, preceded by three of the young nobles of the inferior order, bearing standards of allego-

rical design depicting the triumph of Liberty, Justice, and Concord, forth issued Rienzi, clad in complete armor, the helmet alone excepted. His face was pale with watching and intense excitement, but stern, grave, and solemnly composed; and its expression so repelled any vociferous and vulgar burst of feeling that those who beheld it hushed the shout on their lips, and stilled, by a simultaneous cry of reproof, the gratulations of the crowd behind. Side by side with Rienzi moved Raimond, Bishop of Orvietto; and behind, marching two by two, followed a hundred men-at-arms. In complete silence the procession began its way until, as it approached the Capitol, the awe of the crowd gradually vanished, and thousands upon thousands of voices rent the air with shouts of exultation and joy.

Arrived at the foot of the great staircase which then made the principal ascent to the square of the Capitol, the procession halted; and as the crowd filled up that vast space in front — adorned and hallowed by many of the most majestic columns of the temples of old — Rienzi addressed the Populace, whom he had suddenly elevated into a People.

He depicted forcibly the servitude and misery of the citizens, the utter absence of all law, the want even of common security to life and property. He declared that, undaunted by the peril he incurred, he devoted his life to the regeneration of their common country; and he solemnly appealed to the people to assist the enterprise, and at once to sanction and consolidate the Revolution by an established code of law and a Constitutional Assembly. He then ordered the chart and outline of the Constitution he proposed, to be read by the Herald to the multitude.

It created — or rather revived, with new privileges and powers — a Representative Assembly of Councillors. It proclaimed, as its first law, one that seems simple enough to our happier times, but never hitherto executed at Rome: Every wilful homicide, of whatever rank, was to be punished by death. It enacted that no private noble or citizen should be suffered to maintain fortifications and garrisons in the city or the country; that the gates and bridges of the State should be

under the control of whomsoever should be elected Chief Magistrate. It forbade all harbor of brigands, mercenaries, and robbers, on payment of a thousand marks of silver; and it made the Barons who possessed the neighboring territories responsible for the safety of the roads and the transport of merchandise. It took under the protection of the State the widow and the orphan. It appointed, in each of the quarters of the city, an armed militia, whom the tolling of the bell of the Capitol, at any hour, was to assemble to the protection of the State. It ordained that in each harbor of the coast a vessel should be stationed for the safeguard of commerce. It decreed the sum of one hundred florins to the heirs of every man who died in the defence of Rome; and it devoted the public revenues to the service and protection of the State.

Such, moderate at once and effectual, was the outline of the New Constitution; and it may amuse the reader to consider how great must have been the previous disorders of the city when the common and elementary provisions of civilization and security made the character of the code proposed, and the limit of a popular revolution.

The most rapturous shouts followed this sketch of the New Constitution, and amidst the clamor up rose the huge form of Cecco del Vecchio. Despite his condition, he was a man of great importance at the present crisis: his zeal and his courage, and, perhaps, still more, his brute passion and stubborn prejudice, had made him popular. The lower order of mechanics looked to him as their head and representative; out, then, he spake loud and fearlessly, speaking well, because his mind was full of what he had to say.

"Countrymen and Citizens! This New Constitution meets with your approbation, — so it ought. But what are good laws if we do not have good men to execute them? Who can execute a law so well as the man who designs it? If you ask me to give you a notion how to make a good shield, and my notion pleases you, would you ask me, or another smith, to make it for you? If you ask another, he may make a good shield, but it would not be the same as that which I should have made, and the description of which contented you. Cola

di Rienzi has proposed a Code of Law that shall be our shield. Who should see that the shield become what he proposes, but Cola di Rienzi? Romans, I suggest that Cola di Rienzi be intrusted by the people with the authority, by whatsoever name he pleases, of carrying the New Constitution into effect; and whatever be the means, we, the People, will bear him harmless."

"Long life to Rienzi! Long live Cecco del Vecchio! He hath spoken well! None but the Law-maker shall be the Governor!"

Such were the acclamations which greeted the ambitious heart of the Scholar. The voice of the people invested him with the supreme power. He had created a Commonwealth, to become, if he desired it, a Despot!

CHAPTER VII.

LOOKING AFTER THE HALTER WHEN THE MARE IS STOLEN.

WHILE such were the events at Rome, a servitor of Stephen Colonna was already on his way to Corneto. The astonishment with which the old Baron received the intelligence may be easily imagined. He lost not a moment in convening his troop; and while in all the bustle of departure, the Knight of St. John abruptly entered his presence. His mien had lost its usual frank composure.

"How is this," said he, hastily, — "a revolt? Rienzi sovereign of Rome? Can the news be believed?"

"It is too true!" said Colonna, with a bitter smile. "Where shall we hang him on our return?"

"Talk not so wildly, Sir Baron," replied Montreal, discourteously; "Rienzi is stronger than you think for. I know what men are, and you only know what noblemen are! Where is your kinsman, Adrian?"

"He is here, noble Montreal," said Stephen, shrugging his shoulders, with a half-disdainful smile at the rebuke, which he thought it more prudent not to resent; "he is here! See him enter!"

"You have heard the news?" exclaimed Montreal.

"I have."

"And despise the revolution?"

"I fear it!"

"Then you have some sense in you. But this is none of my affair; I will not interrupt your consultations. Adieu for the present!" and ere Stephen could prevent him, the Knight had quitted the chamber.

"What means this demagogue?" Montreal muttered to himself. "Would he trick me? Has he got rid of my presence in order to monopolize all the profit of the enterprise? I fear me so,—the cunning Roman! We Northern warriors could never compete with the intellect of these Italians but for their cowardice. But what shall be done? I have already bid Rodolf communicate with the brigands, and they are on the eve of departure from their present lord. Well, let it be so! Better that I should first break the power of the Barons, and then make my own terms, sword in hand, with the plebeian. And if I fail in this, sweet Adeline, I shall see thee again,—that is some comfort,—and Louis of Hungary will bid high for the arm and brain of Walter de Montreal! What, ho, Rodolf!" he exclaimed aloud, as the sturdy form of the trooper, half armed and half intoxicated, reeled along the courtyard. "Knave! art thou drunk at this hour?"

"Drunk or sober," answered Rodolf, bending low, "I am at thy bidding."

"Well said! Are thy friends ripe for the saddle?"

"Eighty of them, already tired of idleness and the dull air of Rome, will fly wherever Sir Walter de Montreal wishes."

"Hasten, then, bid them mount; we go not hence with the Colonna, we leave while they are yet talking! Bid my squires attend me!"

And when Stephen Colonna was settling himself on his palfrey, he heard, for the first time, that the Knight of Pro-

venge, Rodolf the trooper, and eighty of the stipendiaries had already departed, — whither, none knew.

"To precede us to Rome, gallant barbarian!" said Colonna. "Sirs, on!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK — THE RETREAT — THE ELECTION — AND THE ADHESION.

ARRIVING at Rome, the company of the Colonna found the gates barred and the walls manned. Stephen bade advance his trumpeters, with one of his captains, imperiously to demand admittance.

"We have orders," replied the chief of the town-guard, "to admit none who bear arms, flags, or trumpets. Let the Lords Colonna dismiss their train, and they are welcome."

"Whose are these insolent mandates?" asked the captain.

"Those of the Lord Bishop of Orvieto and Cola di Rienzi, joint protectors of the Buono Stato."¹

The captain of the Colonna returned to his chief with these tidings. The rage of Stephen was indescribable. "Go back," he cried, as soon as he could summon voice, "and say that if the gates are not forthwith opened to me and mine, the blood of the plebeians be on their own head. As for Raimond, Vicars of the Pope have high spiritual authority, none temporal. Let him prescribe a fast, and he shall be obeyed; but for the rash Rienzi, say that Stephen Colonna will seek him in the Capitol to-morrow, for the purpose of throwing him out of the highest window."

These messages the envoy failed not to deliver.

The captain of the Romans was equally stern in his reply.

"Declare to your lord," said he, "that Rome holds him and his as rebels and traitors, and that the moment you regain your

¹ Good Estate.

troop, our archers receive our command to draw their bows — in the name of the Pope, the City, and the Liberator.”

This threat was executed to the letter ; and ere the old Baron had time to draw up his men in the best array, the gates were thrown open, and a well-armed, if undisciplined, multitude poured forth, with fierce shouts, clashing their arms, and advancing the azure banners of the Roman State. So desperate their charge and so great their numbers that the Barons, after a short and tumultuous conflict, were driven back, and chased by their pursuers for more than a mile from the walls of the city.

As soon as the Barons recovered their disorder and dismay, a hasty council was held, at which various and contradictory opinions were loudly urged. Some were for departing on the instant to Palestrina, which belonged to the Colonna, and possessed an almost inaccessible fortress. Others were for dispersing, and entering peaceably and in detached parties through the other gates. Stephen Colonna — himself incensed and disturbed from his usual self-command — was unable to preserve his authority ; Luca di Savelli,¹ a timid, though treacherous and subtle man, already turned his horse's head, and summoned his men to follow him to his castle in Romagna, when the old Colonna bethought himself of a method by which to keep his band from a disunion that he had the sense to perceive would prove fatal to the common cause. He proposed that they should at once repair to Palestrina, and there fortify themselves, while one of the chiefs should be selected to enter Rome alone, and apparently submissive, to examine the strength of Rienzi, and with the discretionary power to resist if possible, or to make the best terms he could for the admission of the rest.

“And who,” asked Savelli, sneeringly, “will undertake this dangerous mission ? Who, unarmed and alone, will expose himself to the rage of the fiercest populace of Italy, and the caprice of a demagogue in the first flush of his power ?”

¹ The more correct orthography were Luca di Savello, but the one in the text is preserved, as more familiar to the English reader.

The Barons and the Captains looked at each other in silence. Savelli laughed.

Hitherto Adrian had taken no part in the conference, and but little in the previous contest. He now came to the support of his kinsman.

"Signors!" said he, "I will undertake this mission, — but on mine own account, independently of yours; free to act as I may think best for the dignity of a Roman noble and the interests of a Roman citizen; free to raise my standard on mine own tower, or to yield fealty to the new estate."

"Well said!" cried the old Colonna, hastily. "Heaven forbid we should enter Rome as foes, if to enter it as friends be yet allowed us! What say ye, gentles?"

"A more worthy choice could not be selected," said Savelli; "but I should scarce deem it possible that a Colonna could think there was an option between resistance and fealty to this upstart revolution."

"Of that, Signor, I will judge for myself; if you demand an agent for yourselves, choose another. I announce to ye frankly, that I have seen enough of other states to think the recent condition of Rome demanded some redress. Whether Rienzi and Raimond be worthy of the task they have assumed, I know not."

Savelli was silent. The old Colonna seized the word.

"To Palestrina, then! Are ye all agreed on this? At the worst, or at the best, we should not be divided. On this condition alone I hazard the safety of my kinsman!"

The Barons murmured a little among themselves; the expediency of Stephen's proposition was evident, and they at length assented to it.

Adrian saw them depart, and then, attended only by his squire, slowly rode towards a more distant entrance into the city. On arriving at the gates, his name was demanded; he gave it freely.

"Enter, my lord," said the warder; "our orders were to admit all that came unarmed and unattended. But to the Lord Adrian di Castello, alone, we had a special injunction to give the honors due to a citizen and a friend."

Adrian, a little touched by this implied recollection of friendship, now rode through a long line of armed citizens, who saluted him respectfully as he passed, and as he returned the salutation with courtesy, a loud and approving shout followed his horse's steps.

So, save by one attendant alone, and in peace, the young patrician proceeded leisurely through the long streets, empty and deserted, — for nearly one half of the inhabitants were assembled at the walls, and nearly the other half were engaged in a more peaceful duty, — until, penetrating the interior, the wide and elevated space of the Capitol broke upon his sight. The sun was slowly setting over an immense multitude that overspread the spot, and high above a scaffold raised in the centre shone, to the western ray, the great Gonfalon of Rome, studded with silver stars.

Adrian reined in his steed. "This," thought he, "is scarcely the hour thus publicly to confer with Rienzi; yet fain would I, mingled with the crowd, judge how far his power is supported, and in what manner it is borne." Musing a little, he withdrew into one of the obscurer streets, then wholly deserted, surrendered his horse to his squire, and borrowing of the latter his morion and long mantle, passed to one of the more private entrances of the Capitol, and, enveloped in his cloak, stood — one of the crowd — intent upon all that followed.

"And what," he asked of a plainly dressed citizen, "is the cause of this assembly?"

"Heard you not the proclamation?" returned the other in some surprise. "Do you not know that the Council of the City and the Guilds of the Artisans have passed a vote to proffer to Rienzi the title of king of Rome?"

The Knight of the Emperor, to whom belonged that august dignity, drew back in dismay.

"And," resumed the citizen, "this assembly of all the lesser Barons, Councillors, and Artificers, is convened to hear the answer."

"Of course it will be assent?"

"I know not, — there are strange rumors; hitherto the Liberator has concealed his sentiments."

At that instant a loud flourish of martial music announced the approach of Rienzi. The crowd tumultuously divided, and presently, from the Palace of the Capitol to the scaffold, passed Rienzi, still in complete armor save the helmet, and with him, in all the pomp of his episcopal robes, Raimond of Orvietto.

As soon as Rienzi had ascended the platform, and was thus made visible to the whole concourse, no words can suffice to paint the enthusiasm of the scene,—the shouts, the gestures, the tears, the sobs, the wild laughter, in which the sympathy of those lively and susceptible children of the South broke forth. The windows and balconies of the Palace were thronged with the wives and daughters of the lesser Barons and more opulent citizens; and Adrian, with a slight start, beheld amongst them, pale, agitated, tearful, the lovely face of his Irene,—a face that even thus would have outshone all present, but for one by her side, whose beauty the emotion of the hour only served to embellish. The dark, large, and flashing eyes of Nina di Raselli, just bedewed, were fixed proudly on the hero of her choice; and pride, even more than joy, gave a richer carnation to her cheek, and the presence of a queen to her noble and rounded form. The setting sun poured its full glory over the spot,—the bared heads, the animated faces of the crowd, the gray and vast mass of the Capitol; and not far from the side of Rienzi, it brought into a strange and startling light the sculptured form of a colossal Lion of Basalt,¹ which gave its name to a staircase leading to the Capitol. It was an old Egyptian relic,—vast, worn, and grim; some symbol of a vanished creed, to whose face the sculptor had imparted something of the aspect of the human countenance. And this producing the effect probably sought, gave at all times a mystic, preternatural, and fearful expression to the stern features, and

¹ The existent Capitol is very different from the building at the time of Rienzi; and the reader must not suppose that the present staircase, designed by Michael Angelo, at the base of which are two marble lions, removed by Pius IV. from the Church of St. Stephen del Cacco, was the staircase of the Lion of Basalt, which bears so stern a connection with the history of Rienzi. That mute witness of dark deeds is no more.

to that solemn and hushed repose which is so peculiarly the secret of Egyptian sculpture. The awe which this colossal and frowning image was calculated to convey was felt yet more deeply by the vulgar, because "the Staircase of the Lion" was the wonted place of the state executions, as of the state ceremonies. And seldom did the stoutest citizen forget to cross himself, or feel unchilled with a certain terror, whenever, passing by the place, he caught, suddenly fixed upon him, the stony gaze and ominous grin of that old monster from the cities of the Nile.

It was some minutes before the feelings of the assembly allowed Rienzi to be heard. But when, at length, the last shout closed with a simultaneous cry of "Long live Rienzi, Deliverer and King of Rome!" he raised his hand impatiently, and the curiosity of the crowd procured a sudden silence.

"Deliverer of Rome, my countrymen!" said he. "Yes, — change not that title; I am too ambitious to be a King! Preserve your obedience to your Pontiff, your allegiance to your Emperor, but be faithful to your own liberties. Ye have a right to your ancient constitution; but that constitution needed not a king. Emulous of the name of Brutus, I am above the titles of a Tarquin. Romans, awake! awake! be inspired with a nobler love of liberty than that which, if it dethrones the tyrant of to-day, would madly risk the danger of tyranny for to-morrow! Rome wants still a liberator, never a usurper. Take away yon bauble!"

There was a pause; the crowd were deeply affected — but they uttered no shouts; they looked anxiously for a reply from their councillors, or popular leaders.

"Signor," said Pandulfo di Guido, who was one of the Caporioni, "your answer is worthy of your fame; but in order to enforce the law, Rome must endow you with a legal title: if not that of King, deign to accept that of Dictator or of Consul."

"Long live the Consul Rienzi!" cried several voices.

Rienzi waved his hand for silence.

"Pandulfo di Guido, and you, honored Councillors of Rome, such title is at once too august for my merits, and too inappli-

cable to my functions! I am one of the people: the people are my charge; the nobles can protect themselves. Dictator and Consul are the appellations of patricians. No," he continued, after a short pause, "if you deem it necessary, for the preservation of order, that your fellow-citizen should be intrusted with a formal title and a recognized power, be it so; but let it be such as may attest the nature of our new institutions, the wisdom of the people, and the moderation of their leaders. Once, my countrymen, the people elected, for the protectors of their rights and the guardians of their freedom, certain officers responsible to the people, — chosen from the people, provident *for* the people. Their power was great, but it was delegated: a dignity, but a trust. The name of these officers was that of Tribune. Such is the title that conceded, not by clamor alone, but in the full Parliament of the people, and accompanied *by* such Parliament, ruling *with* such Parliament, — such is the title I will gratefully accept."¹

The speech, the sentiments of Rienzi were rendered far more impressive by a manner of earnest and deep sincerity; and some of the Romans, despite their corruption, felt a momentary exultation in the forbearance of their chief. "Long live the Tribune of Rome!" was shouted; but less loud than the cry of "Live the King!" And the vulgar almost thought the revolution was incomplete, because the loftier title was not assumed. To a degenerate and embruted people, liberty seems too plain a thing if unadorned by the pomp of the very despotism they would dethrone. Revenge is their desire, rather than Release; and the greater the new power they create, the greater seems their revenge against the old. Still, all that was most respected, intelligent, and powerful amongst the assembly were delighted at a temperance which they foresaw would free Rome from a thousand dangers,

¹ Gibbon and Sismondi alike (neither of whom appears to have consulted with much attention the original documents preserved by Hocsemius) say nothing of the Representative Parliament, which it was almost Rienzi's first public act to institute or model. Six days from the memorable 19th of May he addressed the people of Viterbo in a letter yet extant. He summons them to elect and send two syndics, or ambassadors, to the general Parliament.

whether from the Emperor or the Pontiff. And their delight was yet increased when Rienzi added, so soon as returning silence permitted: "And since we have been equal laborers in the same cause, whatever honors be awarded to me should be extended also to the Vicar of the Pope, Raimond, Lord Bishop of Orvietto. Remember that both Church and State are properly the rulers of the people only because their benefactors. Long live the first Vicar of a Pope that was ever also the Liberator of a State!"

Whether or not Rienzi was only actuated by patriotism in his moderation, certain it is that his sagacity was at least equal to his virtue; and perhaps nothing could have cemented the revolution more strongly than thus obtaining for a colleague the Vicar and Representative of the Pontifical power: it borrowed, for the time, the sanction of the Pope himself, — thus made to share the responsibility of the revolution, without monopolizing the power of the State.

While the crowd hailed the proposition of Rienzi, while their shouts yet filled the air, while Raimond, somewhat taken by surprise, sought by signs and gestures to convey at once his gratitude and his humility, the Tribune-Elect, casting his eyes around, perceived many hitherto attracted by curiosity, and whom, from their rank and weight, it was desirable to secure in the first heat of the public enthusiasm. Accordingly, as soon as Raimond had uttered a short and pompous harangue, — in which his eager acceptance of the honor proposed him was ludicrously contrasted by his embarrassed desire not to involve himself or the Pope in any untoward consequences that might ensue, — Rienzi motioned to two heralds that stood behind upon the platform; and one of these, advancing, proclaimed — "That as it was desirable that all hitherto neuter should now profess themselves friends or foes, so they were invited to take at once the oath of obedience to the laws, and subscription to the *Buono Stato*."

So great was the popular fervor, and so much had it been refined and deepened in its tone by the addresses of Rienzi, that even the most indifferent had caught the contagion, and no man liked to be seen shrinking from the rest; so that the

most neutral, knowing themselves the most marked, were the most entrapped into allegiance to the Buono Stato. The first who advanced to the platform and took the oath was the Signor di Raselli, the father of Nina. Others of the lesser nobility followed his example.

The presence of the Pope's Vicar induced the aristocratic; the fear of the people urged the selfish; the encouragement of shouts and gratulations excited the vain. The space between Adrian and Rienzi was made clear. The young noble suddenly felt the eyes of the Tribune were upon him, he felt that those eyes recognized and called upon him; he colored; he breathed short. The noble forbearance of Rienzi had touched him to the heart; the applause, the pageant, the enthusiasm of the scene intoxicated, confused him. He lifted his eyes, and saw before him the sister of the Tribune, — the lady of his love! His indecision, his pause, continued, when Raimond, observing him, and obedient to a whisper from Rienzi, artfully cried aloud: "Room for the Lord Adrian di Castello! A Colonna! a Colonna!" Retreat was cut off. Mechanically, and as if in a dream, Adrian ascended to the platform; and to complete the triumph of the Tribune, the sun's last ray beheld the flower of the Colonna — the best and bravest of the Barons of Rome — confessing his authority and subscribing to his laws!

BOOK III.

THE FREEDOM WITHOUT LAW.

BEN furo avventurosi i cavalieri
Ch' erano a quella età, che nei valloni,
Nelle scure spelonche e boschi fieri,
Tane di serpi, d' orsi e di leoni,
Trovavan quel che nei palazzi altieri
Appena or trovar pon giudici buoni;
Donne che nella lor più fresca etade
Sien degne di aver titol di beltade.

ARIOSTO, *Orl. Fur.*, can. xiii. 1.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN OF WALTER DE MONTREAL TO HIS FORTRESS.

WHEN Walter de Montreal and his mercenaries quitted Corneto, they made the best of their way to Rome; arriving there long before the Barons, they met with a similar reception at the gates; but Montreal prudently forbore all attack and menace, and contented himself with sending his trusty Rodolf into the city to seek Rienzi and to crave permission to enter with his troop. Rodolf returned in a shorter time than was anticipated. "Well," said Montreal, impatiently, "you have the order, I suppose. Shall we bid them open the gates?"

"Bid them open our graves," replied the Saxon, bluntly. "I trust my next heraldry will be to a more friendly court."

"How! what mean you?"

"Briefly this: I found the new governor, or whatever his title, in the palace of the Capitol, surrounded by guards and

councillors, and in a suit of the finest armor I ever saw out of Milan."

"Pest on his armor! give us his answer."

"'Tell Walter de Montreal,' said he, then, if you will have it, 'that Rome is no longer a den of thieves; tell him that if he enters he must abide a trial —'"

"A trial!" cried Montreal, grinding his teeth.

"'For participation in the evil doings of Werner and his freebooters.'"

"Ha!"

"'Tell him, moreover, that Rome declares war against all robbers, whether in tent or tower, and that we order him in forty-eight hours to quit the territories of the Church.'"

"He thinks, then, not only to deceive, but to menace me? Well, proceed."

"That was all his reply to you; to me, however, he vouchsafed a caution still more obliging. 'Hark ye, friend,' said he, 'for every German bandit found in Rome after to-morrow our welcome will be cord and gibbet! Begone!'"

"Enough, enough!" cried Montreal, coloring with rage and shame. "Rodolf, you have a skilful eye in these matters: how many Northmen would it take to give that same gibbet to the upstart?"

Rodolf scratched his huge head, and seemed a while lost in calculation; at length he said, "You, Captain, must be the best judge when I tell you that twenty thousand Romans are the least of his force, — so I heard by the way; and this evening he is to accept the crown and depose the Emperor."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Montreal; "is he so mad? Then he will want not our aid to hang himself. My friends, let us wait the result. At present neither barons nor people seem likely to fill our coffers. Let us across the country to Terracina. Thank the saints," and Montreal (who was not without a strange kind of devotion, — indeed he deemed that virtue essential to chivalry) crossed himself piously, "the free companions are never long without quarters!"

"Hurrah for the Knight of St. John!" cried the mercenaries.

"And hurrah for fair Provence and bold Germany!" added

the Knight, as he waved his hand on high, struck spurs into his already wearied horse, and, breaking out into his favorite song,

"His barb, and his sword,
And his lady the peerless," etc.,

Montreal, with his troop, struck gallantly across the Campagna.

The Knight of St. John soon, however, fell into an absorbed and moody revery, and his followers imitating the silence of their chief, in a few minutes the clatter of their arms and the jingle of their spurs alone disturbed the stillness of the wide and gloomy plains across which they made towards Terracina. Montreal was recalling with bitter resentment his conference with Rienzi; and, proud of his own sagacity and talent for scheming, he was humbled and vexed at the discovery that he had been duped by a wilier intriguer. His ambitious designs on Rome, too, were crossed, and even crushed for the moment by the very means to which he had looked for their execution. He had seen enough of the Barons to feel assured that while Stephen Colonna lived, the head of the order, he was not likely to obtain that mastery in the state which, if leagued with a more ambitious or a less timid and less potent signor, might reward his aid in expelling Rienzi. Under all circumstances he deemed it advisable to remain aloof. Should Rienzi grow strong, Montreal might make the advantageous terms he desired with the Barons; should Rienzi's power decay, his pride, necessarily humbled, might drive him to seek the assistance and submit to the proposals of Montreal. The ambition of the Provençal, though vast and daring, was not of a consistent and persevering nature. Action and enterprise were dearer to him, as yet, than the rewards which they proffered; and if baffled in one quarter, he turned himself, with the true spirit of the knight-errant, to any other field for his achievements. Louis, king of Hungary, stern, warlike, implacable, seeking vengeance for the murder of his brother, the ill-fated husband of Johanna (the beautiful and guilty Queen of Naples, — the Mary Stuart of Italy), had already prepared himself to subject the garden of Campania to the Hungarian yoke. Already his bastard brother had entered Italy; already some of the Neapolitan states had declared in

his favor; already promises had been held out by the Northern monarch to the scattered Companies; and already those fierce mercenaries gathered menacingly round the frontiers of that Eden of Italy, attracted, as vultures to the carcass, by the preparation of war and the hope of plunder. Such was the field to which the bold mind of Montreal now turned its thoughts; and his soldiers had joyfully conjectured his design when they had heard him fix Terracina as their bourne. Provident of every resource, and refining his audacious and unprincipled valor by a sagacity which promised, when years had more matured and sobered his restless chivalry, to rank him among the most dangerous enemies Italy had ever known, on the first sign of Louis's warlike intentions Montreal had seized and fortified a strong castle on that delicious coast beyond Terracina by which lies the celebrated pass once held by Fabius against Hannibal, and which Nature has so favored, for war as for peace, that a handful of armed men might stop the march of an army. The possession of such a fortress on the very frontiers of Naples gave Montreal an importance of which he trusted to avail himself with the Hungarian king; and now, thwarted in his more grand and aspiring projects upon Rome, his sanguine, active, and elastic spirit congratulated itself upon the resource it had secured.

The band halted at nightfall on this side the Pontine Marshes, seizing without scruple some huts and sheds, from which they ejected the miserable tenants, and slaughtering with no greater ceremony the swine, cattle, and poultry of a neighboring farm. Shortly after sunrise they crossed those fatal swamps, which had already been partially drained by Boniface VIII.; and Montreal, refreshed by sleep, reconciled to his late mortification by the advantages opened to him in the approaching war with Naples, and rejoicing as he approached a home which held one who alone divided his heart with ambition, resumed all the gayety which belonged to his Gallic birth and his reckless habits. And that deadly but consecrated road, where yet may be seen the labors of Augustus in the canal which had witnessed the Voyage so humorously described by Horace, echoed with the loud laughter and frequent snatches of wild

song by which the barbarian robbers enlivened their rapid march.

It was noon when the company entered upon that romantic pass I have before referred to, — the ancient Lantula. High to the left rose steep and lofty rocks, then covered by the prodigal verdure and the countless flowers of the closing May; while to the right the sea, gentle as a lake and blue as heaven, rippled musically at their feet. Montreal, who largely possessed the poetry of his land, which is so eminently allied with a love of Nature, might at another time have enjoyed the beauty of the scene; but at that moment less external and more household images were busy within him.

Abruptly ascending where a winding path up the mountain offered a rough and painful road to their horses' feet, the band at length arrived before a strong fortress of gray stone, whose towers were concealed by the lofty foliage until they emerged sullenly and suddenly from the laughing verdure. The sound of the bugle, the pennon of the Knight, the rapid watchword, produced a loud shout of welcome from a score or two of grim soldiery on the walls; the portcullis was raised, and Montreal, throwing himself hastily from his panting steed, sprang across the threshold of a jutting porch and traversed a huge hall, when a lady — young, fair, and richly dressed — met him with a step equally swift, and fell breathless and overjoyed into his arms.

"My Walter, my dear, dear Walter! Welcome — ten thousand welcomes!"

"Adeline, my beautiful, my adored, I see thee again!"

Such were the greetings interchanged as Montreal pressed his lady to his heart, kissing away her tears and lifting her face to his, while he gazed on its delicate bloom with all the wistful anxiety of affection after absence.

"Fairest," said he, tenderly, "thou hast pined, thou hast lost roundness and color since we parted! Come, come; thou art too gentle or too foolish for a soldier's love!"

"Ah, Walter!" replied Adeline, clinging to him, "now thou art returned, and I shall be well. Thou wilt not leave me again a long, long time?"

"Sweet one, no;" and flinging his arm round her waist, the lovers — for, alas! they were not wedded — retired to the more private chambers of the castle.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE OF LOVE AND WAR — THE MESSENGER OF PEACE — THE JOUST.

GIRT with his soldiery, secure in his feudal hold, enchanted with the beauty of the earth, sky, and sea around, and passionately adoring his Adeline, Montreal for a while forgot all his more stirring projects and his ruder occupations. His nature was capable of great tenderness, as of great ferocity; and his heart smote him when he looked at the fair cheek of his lady and saw that even his presence did not suffice to bring back the smile and the fresh hues of old. Often he cursed that fatal oath of his knightly order which forbade him to wed, though with one more than his equal, and remorse embittered his happiest hours. That gentle lady in that robber hold, severed from all she had been taught most to prize, — mother, friends, and fair fame, — only loved her seducer the more intensely; only the more concentrated upon one object all the womanly and tender feelings denied every other and less sinful vent. But she felt her shame, though she sought to conceal it, and a yet more gnawing grief than even that of shame contributed to prey upon her spirits and undermine her health. Yet, withal, in Montreal's presence she was happy, even in regret; and in her declining health she had at least a consolation in the hope to die while his love was undiminished. Sometimes they made short excursions, for the disturbed state of the country forbade them to wander far from the castle, through the sunny woods and along the glassy sea, which make the charm of that delicious scenery; and that mixture of the savage with the tender, the wild escort, the tent in some green glade in the woods at noon, the lute and voice of Adeline, with the fierce soldiers grouped and listening in the distance, might have well suited

the verse of Ariosto, and harmonized singularly with that strange, disordered, yet chivalric time, in which the Classic South became the seat of the Northern Romance. Still, however, Montreal maintained his secret intercourse with the Hungarian king, and, plunged in new projects, willingly forsook for the present all his designs on Rome. Yet deemed he that his more august ambition was only delayed, and bright in the more distant prospects of his adventurous career, rose the Capitol of Rome and shone the sceptre of the Caesars.

One day, as Montreal, with a small troop in attendance, passed on horseback near the walls of Terracina, the gates were suddenly thrown open, and a numerous throng issued forth, preceded by a singular figure, whose steps they followed bareheaded and with loud blessings; a train of monks closed the procession, chanting a hymn, of which the concluding words were as follows:—

Beauteous on the mountains, lo,
 The feet of him glad tidings gladly bringing;
 The flowers along his pathway grow,
 And voices, heard aloft, to angel harps are singing;
 And strife and slaughter cease
 Before thy blessed way, Young Messenger of Peace!
 O'er the mount and through the moor
 Glide thy holy steps secure;
 Day and night no fear thou knowest,
 Lonely — but with God thou goest.
 Where the heathen rage the fiercest,
 Through the armed throng thou piercest;
 For thy coat of mail, bedight
 In thy spotless robe of white;
 For the sinful sword, thy hand
 Bearing bright the silver wand.
 Through the camp and through the court,
 Through the bandit's gloomy fort,
 On the mission of the dove,
 Speeds the minister of love.
 By a word the wildest taming,
 And the world to Christ reclaiming;
 While, as once the waters trod
 By the footsteps of thy God,
 War and wrath and rapine cease,
 Hush'd round thy charmed path, O Messenger of Peace!

The stranger to whom these honors were paid was a young, unbearded man, clothed in white wrought with silver: he was unarmed and barefooted; in his hand he held a tall silver wand. Montreal and his party halted in astonishment and wonder, and the Knight, spurring his horse towards the crowd, confronted the stranger.

"How, friend," quoth the Provençal, "is thine a new order of pilgrims, or what especial holiness has won thee this homage?"

"Back, back!" cried some of the bolder of the crowd; "let not the robber dare arrest the Messenger of Peace."

Montreal waved his hand disdainfully.

"I speak not to you, good sirs, and the worthy friars in your rear know full well that I never injured herald or palmer."

The monks, ceasing from their hymn, advanced hastily to the spot; and indeed the devotion of Montreal had ever induced him to purchase the good-will of whatever monastery neighbored his wandering home.

"My son," said the eldest of the brethren, "this is a strange spectacle, and a sacred; and when thou learnest all, thou wilt rather give the messenger a passport of safety from the unthinking courage of thy friends than intercept his path of peace."

"Ye puzzle still more my simple brain," said Montreal, impatiently; "let the youth speak for himself. I perceive that on his mantle are the arms of Rome blended with other quarterings, which are a mystery to me, though sufficiently versed in heraldic art, as befits a noble and a knight."

"Signor," said the youth, gravely, "know in me the messenger of Cola di Rienzi, Tribune of Rome, charged with letters to many a baron and prince in the ways between Rome and Naples. The arms wrought upon my mantle are those of the Pontiff, the City, and the Tribune."

"Umph! thou must have bold nerves to traverse the Campagna with no other weapon than that stick of silver!"

"Thou art mistaken, Sir Knight," replied the youth, boldly, "and judgest of the present by the past. Know that not a single robber now lurks within the Campagna; the arms of the

Tribune have rendered every road around the city as secure as the broadest street of the city itself."

"Thou tellest me wonders."

"Through the forest and in the fortress, through the wildest solitudes, through the most populous towns, have my comrades borne this silver wand unmolested and unscathed. Wherever we pass along, thousands hail us, and tears of joy bless the messengers of him who hath expelled the brigand from his hold, the tyrant from his castle, and insured the gains of the merchant and the hut of the peasant."

"*Par Dieu!*" said Montreal, with a stern smile, "I ought to be thankful for the preference shown to me. I have not yet received the commands, nor felt the vengeance, of the Tribune; yet, methinks, my humble castle lies just within the patrimony of Saint Peter."

"Pardon me, Signor Cavalier," said the youth; "but do I address the renowned Knight of St. John, warrior of the Cross, yet leader of banditti?"

"Boy, you are bold; I am Walter de Montreal."

"I am bound, then, Sir Knight, to your castle."

"Take care how thou reach it before me, or thou standest a fair chance of a quick exit. How now, my friends?" seeing that the crowd at these words gathered closer round the messenger. "Think ye that I, who have my mate in kings, would find a victim in an unarmed boy? Fie! give way, give way. Young man, follow me homeward; you are safe in my castle as in your mother's arms." So saying, Montreal, with great dignity and deliberate gravity, rode slowly towards his castle, his soldiers, wondering, at a little distance, and the white-robed messenger following with the crowd, who refused to depart; so great was their enthusiasm that they even ascended to the gates of the dreaded castle, and insisted on waiting without until the return of the youth assured them of his safety.

Montreal, who, however lawless elsewhere, strictly preserved the rights of the meanest boor in his immediate neighborhood, and rather affected popularity with the poor, bade the crowd enter the courtyard, ordered his servitors to provide them with

wine and refreshment, regaled the good monks in his great hall, and then led the way to a small room, where he received the messenger.

"This," said the youth, "will best explain my mission," as he placed a letter before Montreal.

The Knight cut the silk with his dagger, and read the epistle with great composure.

"Your Tribune," said he, when he had finished it, "has learned the laconic style of power very soon. He orders me to render this castle and vacate the Papal territory within ten days. He is obliging; I must have breathing time to consider the proposal. Be seated, I pray you, young sir. Forgive me, but I should have imagined that your lord had enough upon his hands with his Roman barons, to make him a little more indulgent to us foreign visitors. Stephen Colonna—"

"Is returned to Rome, and has taken the oath of allegiance; the Savelli, the Orsini, the Frangipani, have all subscribed their submission to the Buono Stato."

"How!" cried Montreal, in great surprise.

"Not only have they returned, but they have submitted to the dispersion of all their mercenaries and the dismantling of all their fortifications. The iron of the Orsini palace now barricades the Capitol, and the stonework of the Colonna and the Savelli has added new battlements to the gates of the Lateran and St. Laurence."

"Wonderful man!" said Montreal, with reluctant admiration. "By what means was this effected?"

"A stern command and a strong force to back it. At the first sound of the great bell, twenty thousand Romans rise in arms. What to such an army are the brigands of an Orsini or a Colonna? Sir Knight, your valor and renown make even Rome admire you; and I, a Roman, bid you beware."

"Well, I thank thee; thy news, friend, robs me of breath. So the Barons submit, then?"

"Yes. On the first day, one of the Colonna, the Lord Adrian, took the oath; within a week, Stephen, assured of safe conduct, left Palestrina, the Savelli in his train; the Orsini followed. Even Martino di Porto has silently succumbed."

"The Tribune. — But is that his dignity? Methought he was to be king —"

"He was offered, and he refused the title. His present rank, which arrogates no patrician honors, went far to conciliate the nobles."

"A wise knave! — I beg pardon, a sagacious prince! Well, then, the Tribune lords it mightily, I suppose, over the great Roman names?"

"Pardon me; he enforces impartial justice from peasant or patrician; but he preserves to the nobles all their just privileges and legal rank."

"Ha! and the vain puppets, so they keep the semblance, scarce miss the substance, — I understand. But this shows genius. The Tribune is unwed, I think. Does he look among the Colonna for a wife?"

"Sir Knight, the Tribune is already married; within three days after his ascension to power he won and bore home the daughter of the Baron di Raselli."

"Raselli! no great name; he might have done better."

"But it is said," resumed the youth, smiling, "that the Tribune will shortly be allied to the Colonna, through his fair sister the Signora Irene. The Baron di Castello woos her."

"What, Adrian Colonna! Enough; you have convinced me that a man who contents the people and awes or conciliates the nobles is born for empire. My answer to this letter I will send myself. For your news, Sir Messenger, accept this jewel," and the Knight took from his finger a gem of some price. "Nay, shrink not; it was as freely given to me as it is now to thee."

The youth, who had been agreeably surprised and impressed by the manner of the renowned freebooter, and who was not a little astonished himself with the ease and familiarity with which he had been relating to Fra Moreale, in his own fortress, the news of Rome, bowed low as he accepted the gift.

The astute Provençal, who saw the excellent impression he had made, perceived also that it might be of advantage in delaying the measures he might deem it expedient to adopt.

"Assure the Tribune," said he, on dismissing the messenger, "shouldst thou return ere my letter arrive, that I admire his genius, hail his power, and will not fail to consider as favorably as I may of his demand."

"Better," said the messenger, warmly (he was of good blood and gentle bearing), "better ten tyrants for our enemy than one Montreal."

"An enemy ! Believe me, sir, I seek no enmity with princes who know how to govern, or a people that has the wisdom at once to rule and to obey."

The whole of that day, however, Montreal remained thoughtful and uneasy ; he despatched trusty messengers to the Governor of Aquila (who was then in correspondence with Louis of Hungary), to Naples, and to Rome, — the last charged with a letter to the Tribune, which, without absolutely compromising himself, affected submission, and demanded only a longer leisure for the preparations of departure. But at the same time fresh fortifications were added to the castle, ample provisions were laid in, and, night and day, spies and scouts were stationed along the pass and in the town of Terracina. Montreal was precisely the chief who prepared most for war when most he pretended peace.

One morning, the fifth from the appearance of the Roman messenger, Montreal, after narrowly surveying his outworks and his stores, and feeling satisfied that he could hold out at least a month's siege, repaired, with a gayer countenance than he had lately worn, to the chamber of Adeline.

The lady was seated by the casement of the tower, from which might be seen the glorious landscape of woods and vales and orange groves, — a strange garden for such a palace ! As she leant her face upon her hand, with her profile slightly turned to Montreal, there was something ineffably graceful in the bend of her neck, the small head so expressive of gentle blood, with the locks parted in front in that simple fashion which modern times have so happily revived. But the expression of the half-averted face, the abstracted intentness of the gaze, and the profound stillness of the attitude, were so sad and mournful that Montreal's purposed greeting of gallantry

and gladness died upon his lips. He approached in silence, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

Adeline turned, and taking the hand in hers, pressed it to her heart and smiled away all her sadness.

"Dearest," said Montreal, "couldst thou know how much any shadow of grief on thy bright face darkens my heart, thou wouldst never grieve. But no wonder that in these rude walls — no female of equal rank near thee, and such mirth as Montreal can summon to his halls, grating to thy ear — no wonder that thou repentest thee of thy choice."

"Ah! no, no, Walter, I never repent. I did but think of our child as you entered. Alas! he was our only child. How fair he was, Walter; how he resembled thee!"

"Nay, he had thine eyes and brow," replied the Knight, with a faltering voice, and turning away his head.

"Walter," resumed the lady, sighing, "do you remember? This is his birthday; he is ten years old to-day. We have loved each other eleven years, and thou hast not tired yet of thy poor Adeline."

"As well might the saints weary of Paradise," replied Montreal, with an enamoured tenderness which changed into softness the whole character of his heroic countenance.

"Could I think so, I should indeed be blest!" answered Adeline. "But a little while longer, and the few charms I yet possess must fade; and what other claim have I on thee?"

"All claim, — the memory of thy first blushes, thy first kiss, of thy devoted sacrifices, of thy patient wanderings, of thy uncomplaining love! Ah, Adeline, we are of Provence, not of Italy; and when did Knight of Provence avoid his foe or forsake his love? But enough, dearest, of home and melancholy for to-day. I come to bid thee forth. I have sent on the servitors to pitch our tent beside the sea; we will enjoy the orange-blossoms while we may. Ere another week pass over us, we may have sterner pastime and closer confines."

"How, dearest Walter! Thou dost not apprehend danger?"

"Thou speakest, lady-bird," said Montreal, laughing, "as if danger were novelty; methinks by this time thou shouldst know it as the atmosphere we breathe."

"Ah, Walter, is this to last forever? Thou art now rich and renowned; canst thou not abandon this career of strife?"

"Now out on thee, Adeline! What are riches and renown but the means to power? And for strife, the shield of warriors was my cradle: pray the saints it be my bier! These wild and wizard extremes of life, — from the bower to the tent, from the cavern to the palace; to-day a wandering exile, to-morrow the equal of kings, — make the true element of the chivalry of my Norman sires. Normandy taught me war, and sweet Provence love. Kiss me, dear Adeline; and now let thy handmaids attire thee. Forget not thy lute, sweet one. We will rouse the echoes with the songs of Provence."

The ductile temper of Adeline yielded easily to the gayety of her lord, and the party soon sallied from the castle towards the spot in which Montreal had designed their resting-place during the heats of day. But already prepared for all surprise, the castle was left strictly guarded, and besides the domestic servitors of the castle, a detachment of ten soldiers, completely armed, accompanied the lovers. Montreal himself wore his corselet, and his squires followed with his helmet and lance. Beyond the narrow defile at the base of the castle the road at that day opened into a broad patch of verdure, circled on all sides, save that open to the sea, by wood, interspersed with myrtle and orange, and a wilderness of odorous shrubs. In this space, and sheltered by the broad-spreading and classic *fagus* (so improperly translated into the English *beech*), a gay pavilion was prepared, which commanded the view of the sparkling sea, — shaded from the sun, but open to the gentle breeze. This was poor Adeline's favorite recreation, if recreation it might be called. She rejoiced to escape from the gloomy walls of her castellated prison, and to enjoy the sunshine and the sweets of that voluptuous climate without the fatigue which of late all exercise occasioned her. It was a gallantry on the part of Montreal, who foresaw how short an interval might elapse before the troops of Rienzi besieged his walls, and who was himself no less at home in the bower than in the field.

As they reclined within the pavilion, the lover and his lady,

of the attendants without, some lounged idly on the beach, some prepared the awning of a pleasure-boat against the decline of the sun, some, in a ruder tent, out of sight in the wood, arranged the mid-day repast; while the strings of the lute, touched by Montreal himself with a careless skill, gave their music to the dreamy stillness of the noon.

While thus employed, one of Montreal's scouts arrived breathless and heated at the tent.

"Captain," said he, "a company of thirty lances completely armed, with a long retinue of squires and pages, have just quitted Terracina. Their banners bear the twofold insignia of Rome and the Colonna."

"Ho!" said Montreal, gayly, "such a troop is a welcome addition to our company. Send our squire hither."

The squire appeared.

"Hie thee on thy steed towards the procession thou wilt meet with in the pass (nay, sweet lady mine, no forbiddal!), seek the chief, and say that the good Knight Walter de Montreal sends him greeting, and prays him, in passing our proper territory, to rest a while with us a welcome guest; and — stay — add that if to while an hour or so in gentle pastime be acceptable to him, Walter de Montreal would rejoice to break a lance with him, or any knight in his train, in honor of our respective ladies. Hie thee quick!"

"Walter, Walter," began Adeline, who had that keen and delicate sensitiveness to her situation which her reckless lord often wantonly forgot, "Walter, dear Walter, canst thou think it honor to —"

"Hush thee, sweet *Fleur de lis*! Thou hast not seen pastime this many a day; I long to convince thee that thou art still the fairest lady in Italy, — ay, and of Christendom. But these Italians are craven knights, and thou needst not fear that my proffer will be accepted. But in truth, lady mine, I rejoice for graver objects that chance throws a Roman noble, perhaps a Colonna, in my way, — women understand not these matters, — and aught concerning Rome touches us home at this moment."

With that the Knight frowned, as was his wont in thought,

and Adeline ventured to say no more, but retired to the interior division of the pavilion.

Meanwhile the squire approached the procession that had now reached the middle of the pass. And a stately and gallant company it was. If the complete harness of the soldiery seemed to attest a warlike purpose, it was contradicted on the other hand by a numerous train of unarmed squires and pages gorgeously attired, while the splendid blazon of two heralds preceding the standard-bearers proclaimed their object as peaceful, and their path as sacred. It required but a glance at the company to tell the leader. Arrayed in a breastplate of steel wrought profusely with gold arabesques, over which was a mantle of dark-green velvet bordered with pearls, while above his long dark locks waved a black ostrich plume in a high Macedonian cap, — such as, I believe, is now worn by the Grand Master of the Order of St. Constantine, — rode in the front of the party a young cavalier, distinguished from his immediate comrades partly by his graceful presence and partly by his splendid dress.

The squire approached respectfully, and dismounting, delivered himself of his charge.

The young cavalier smiled as he answered: "Bear back to Sir Walter de Montreal the greeting of Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello, and say the solemn object of my present journey will scarce permit me to encounter the formidable lance of so celebrated a knight; and I regret this the more, inasmuch as I may not yield to any dame the palm of my liege lady's beauty. I must live in hope of a happier occasion. For the rest, I will cheerfully abide for some few hours the guest of so courteous a host."

The squire bowed low. "My master," said he, hesitatingly, "will grieve much to miss so noble an opponent. But my message refers to all this knightly and gallant train; and if the Lord Adrian di Castello deems himself forbidden the joust by the object of his present journey, surely one of his comrades will be his proxy with my master?"

Out and quickly spoke a young noble by the side of Adrian, Riccardo Annibaldi, who afterwards did good service both to

the Tribune and to Rome, and whose valor brought him, in later life, to an untimely end.

"By the Lord Adrian's permission," cried he, "I will break a lance with —"

"Hush, Annibaldi!" interrupted Adrian. "And you, Sir Squire, know that Adrian di Castello permits no proxy in arms. Advise the Knight of St. John that we accept his hospitality, and if, after some converse on graver matters, he should still desire so light an entertainment, I will forget that I am the ambassador to Naples, and remember only that I am a Knight of the Empire. You have your answer."

The squire with much ceremony made his obeisance, remounted his steed, and returned in a half-gallop to his master.

"Forgive me, dear Annibaldi," said Adrian, "that I balked your valor; and believe me that I never more longed to break a lance against any man than I do against this boasting Frenchman. But bethink you that though to us, brought up in the dainty laws of chivalry, Walter de Montreal is the famous Knight of Provence, to the Tribune of Rome, whose grave mission we now fulfil, he is but the mercenary captain of a Free Company. Grievously in his eyes should we sully our dignity by so wanton and irrelevant a holiday conflict with a declared and professional brigand."

"For all that," said Annibaldi, "the brigand ought not to boast that a Roman knight shunned a Provençal lance."

"Cease, I pray thee!" said Adrian, impatiently. In fact, the young Colonna already chafed bitterly against his discreet and dignified rejection of Montreal's proffer; and recollecting with much pique the disparaging manner in which the Provençal had spoken of the Roman chivalry, as well as a certain tone of superiority which in all warlike matters Montreal had assumed over him, he now felt his cheek burn and his lip quiver. Highly skilled in the martial accomplishments of his time, he had a natural and excusable desire to prove that he was at least no unworthy antagonist even of the best lance in Italy; and, added to this, the gallantry of the age made him feel it a sort of treason to his mistress to forego any means of asserting her perfections.

It was therefore with considerable irritation that Adrian, as the pavilion of Montreal became visible, perceived the squire returning to him. And the reader will judge how much this was increased when the latter, once more dismounting, accosted him thus:—

“My master, the Knight of St. John, on hearing the courteous answer of the Lord Adrian di Castello, bids me say that lest the graver converse the Lord Adrian refers to should mar gentle and friendly sport, he ventures respectfully to suggest that the tilt should preface the converse. The sod before the tent is so soft and smooth that even a fall could be attended with *no danger* to knight or steed.”

“By our Lady!” cried Adrian and Annibaldi in a breath, “but thy last words are discourteous; and” (proceeded Adrian, recovering himself) “since thy master will have it so, let him look to his horse’s girths. I will not gainsay his fancy.”

Montreal, who had thus insisted upon the exhibition, partly, it may be, from the gay and ruffling bravado common still amongst his brave countrymen, partly because he was curious of exhibiting before those who might soon be his open foes his singular and unrivalled address in arms, was yet more moved to it on learning the name of the leader of the Roman Company; for his vain and haughty spirit, however it had disguised resentment at the time, had by no means forgiven certain warm expressions of Adrian in the palace of Stephen Colonna and in the unfortunate journey to Corneto. While Adrian, halting at the entrance of the defile, aided by his squires indignantly but carefully indued the rest of his armor, and saw, himself, to the girths, stirrup-leathers, and various buckles in the caparison of his noble charger, Montreal in great glee kissed his lady,—who, though too soft to be angry, was deeply vexed, and yet her vexation half-forgotten in fear for his safety,—snatched up her scarf of blue, which he threw over his breastplate, and completed his array with the indifference of a man certain of victory. He was destined, however, to one disadvantage, and that the greatest,—his armor and lance had been brought from the castle, not his war-horse. His palfrey was too slight to bear the great weight of his armor;

nor amongst his troop was there one horse that for power and bone could match with Adrian's. He chose, however, the strongest that was at hand; and a loud shout from his wild followers testified their admiration when he sprang unaided from the ground into the saddle, — a rare and difficult feat of agility in a man completely arrayed in the ponderous armor which issued at that day from the forges of Milan, and was worn far more weighty in Italy than any other part of Europe. While both companies grouped slowly, and mingled in a kind of circle round the green turf, and the Roman heralds, with bustling importance, attempted to marshal the spectators into order, Montreal rode his charger round the sward, forcing it into various caracoles, and exhibiting, with the vanity that belonged to him, his exquisite and practised horsemanship.

At length Adrian, his visor down, rode slowly into the green space, amidst the cheers of his party. The two Knights, at either end, gravely fronted each other; they made the courtesies with their lances which, in friendly and sportive encounters, were customary; and as they thus paused for the signal of encounter, the Italians trembled for the honor of their chief: Montreal's stately height and girth of chest forming a strong contrast, even in armor, to the form of his opponent, which was rather under the middle standard, and though firmly knit, slightly and slenderly built. But to that perfection was skill in arms brought in those times that great strength and size were far from being either the absolute requisites or even the usual attributes of the more celebrated knights, — in fact, so much was effected by the power and the management of the steed that a light weight in the rider was often rather to his advantage than his prejudice; and, even at a later period, the most accomplished victors in the tourney, the French Bayard and the English Sidney, were far from remarkable either for bulk or stature.

Whatever the superiority of Montreal in physical power, was, in much, counterbalanced by the inferiority of his horse, which, though a thick-built and strong Calabrian, had neither the blood, bone, nor practised discipline of the Northern charger of the Roman. The shining coat of the latter, coal

black, was set off by a scarlet cloth wrought in gold; the neck and shoulders were clad in scales of mail; and from the forehead projected a long point, like the horn of a unicorn, while on its crest waved a tall plume of scarlet and white feathers. As the mission of Adrian to Naples was that of pomp and ceremony to a court of great splendor, so his array and retinue were befitting the occasion and the passion for show that belonged to the time; and the very bridle of his horse, which was three inches broad, was decorated with gold, and even jewels. The Knight himself was clad in mail which had tested the finest art of the celebrated Ludovico of Milan; and, altogether, his appearance was unusually gallant and splendid, and seemed still more so beside the plain but brightly polished and artfully flexible armor of Montreal (adorned only with his lady's scarf) and the common and rude mail of his charger. This contrast, however, was not welcome to the Provençal, whose vanity was especially indulged in warlike equipments, and who, had he foreseen the "pastime" that awaited him, would have outshone even the Colonna.

The trumpeters of either party gave a short blast: the Knights remained erect as statues of iron; a second, and each slightly bent over his saddle-bow; a third, and with spears couched, slackened reins, and at full speed on they rushed, and fiercely they met midway. With the reckless arrogance which belonged to him, Montreal had imagined that at the first touch of his lance Adrian would have been unhorsed; but to his great surprise the young Roman remained firm, and amidst the shouts of his party passed on to the other end of the lists. Montreal himself was rudely shaken, but lost neither seat nor stirrup.

"This can be no carpet knight," muttered Montreal between his teeth as, this time, he summoned all his skill for a second encounter; while Adrian, aware of the great superiority of his charger, resolved to bring it to bear against his opponent. Accordingly, when the knights again rushed forward, Adrian, covering himself well with his buckler, directed his care less against the combatant, whom he felt no lance wielded by mortal hand was likely to dislodge, than against the less noble

animal he bestrode. The shock of Montreal's charge was like an avalanche: his lance shivered into a thousand pieces. Adrian lost both stirrups, and but for the strong iron bows which guarded the saddle in front and rear, would have been fairly unhorsed; as it was, he was almost doubled back by the encounter, and his ears rung and his eyes reeled, so that for a moment or two he almost lost all consciousness. But his steed had well repaid its nurture and discipline. Just as the combatants closed, the animal, rearing on high, pressed forward with its mighty crest against its opponent with a force so irresistible as to drive back Montreal's horse several paces; while Adrian's lance, poised with exquisite skill, striking against the Provençal's helmet, somewhat rudely diverted the Knight's attention for the moment from his rein. Montreal drawing the curb too tightly in the suddenness of his recovery, the horse reared on end, and receiving at that instant, full upon his breastplate, the sharp horn and mailed crest of Adrian's charger, fell back over its rider upon the sword. Montreal disencumbered himself in great rage and shame, as a faint cry from his pavilion reached his ear and redoubled his mortification. He rose with a lightness which astonished the beholders, — for so heavy was the armor worn at that day that few knights once stretched upon the ground could rise without assistance, — and drawing his sword, cried out fiercely: "On foot, on foot! The fall was not mine, but this accursed beast's, that I must needs for my sins raise to the rank of a charger. Come on —"

"Nay, Sir Knight," said Adrian, drawing off his gauntlets and unbuckling his helmet, which he threw on the ground, "I come to thee a guest and a friend; but to fight on foot is the encounter of mortal foes. Did I accept thy offer, my defeat would but stain thy knighthood."

Montreal, whose passion had beguiled him for the moment, sullenly acquiesced in this reasoning. Adrian hastened to soothe his antagonist. "For the rest," said he, "I cannot pretend to the prize. Your lance lost me my stirrups — mine left you unshaken. You say right: the defeat, if any, was that of your steed."

"We may meet again when I am more equally horsed," said Montreal, still chafing.

"Now, our Lady forbid!" exclaimed Adrian, with so devout an earnestness that the bystanders could not refrain from laughing; and even Montreal, grimly and half-reluctantly, joined in the merriment. The courtesy of his foe, however, conciliated and touched the more frank and soldierly qualities of his nature, and composing himself, he replied:—

"Signor di Castello, I rest your debtor for a courtesy that I have but little imitated. Howbeit, if thou wouldst bind me to thee forever, thou wilt suffer me to send for my own charger and afford me a chance to retrieve mine honor. With that steed, or with one equal to thine, which seems to me of the English breed, I will gage all I possess,—lands, castle, and gold, sword and spurs,—to maintain this pass, one by one, against all thy train."

Fortunately, perhaps, for Adrian, ere he could reply, Riccardo Annibaldi cried, with great warmth, "Sir Knight, I have with me two steeds well practised in the tourney: take thy choice, and accept in me a champion of the Roman against the French chivalry; there is my gage."

"Signor," replied Montreal, with ill-suppressed delight, "thy proffer shows so gallant and free a spirit that it were foul sin in me to balk it. I accept thy gage; and whichever of thy steeds thou rejectest, in God's name bring it hither, and let us waste no words before action."

Adrian, who felt that hitherto the Romans had been more favored by fortune than merit, vainly endeavored to prevent this second hazard. But Annibaldi was greatly chafed, and his high rank rendered it impolitic in Adrian to offend him by peremptory prohibition; the Colonna reluctantly, therefore, yielded his assent to the engagement. Annibaldi's steeds were led to the spot,—the one a noble roan, the other a bay, of somewhat less breeding and bone, but still of great strength and price. Montreal, finding the choice pressed upon him, gallantly selected the latter and less excellent.

Annibaldi was soon arrayed for the encounter, and Adrian gave the word to the trumpeters. The Roman was of a stature

almost equal to that of Montreal, and though some years younger, seemed, in his armor, nearly of the same thews and girth, so that the present antagonists appeared at the first glance more evenly matched than the last. But this time Montreal, well horsed, inspired to the utmost by shame and pride, felt himself a match for an army; and he met the young Baron with such prowess that while the very plume on his casque seemed scarcely stirred, the Italian was thrown several paces from his steed, and it was not till some moments after his visor was removed by his squires that he recovered his senses. This event restored Montreal to all his natural gayety of humor, and effectually raised the spirits of his followers, who had felt much humbled by the previous encounter.

He himself assisted Annibaldi to rise, with great courtesy and a profusion of compliments, — which the proud Roman took in stern silence, — and then led the way to the pavilion, loudly ordering the banquet to be spread. Annibaldi, however, loitered behind; and Adrian, who penetrated his thoughts, and who saw that over their cups a quarrel between the Provençal and his friend was likely to ensue, drawing him aside, said: "Methinks, dear Annibaldi, it would be better if you, with the chief of our following, were to proceed onward to Fondi, where I will join you at sunset. My squires and some eight lances will suffice for my safeguard here; and, to say truth, I desire a few private words with our strange host, in the hope that he may be peaceably induced to withdraw from hence without the help of our Roman troops, who have enough elsewhere to feed their valor."

Annibaldi pressed his companion's hand. "I understand thee," he replied, with a slight blush; "and, indeed, I could but ill brook the complacent triumph of the barbarian. I accept thy offer."

CHAPTER III.

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE ROMAN AND THE PROVENÇAL
— ADELINE'S HISTORY — THE MOON-LIT SEA — THE LUTE AND
THE SONG.

As soon as Annibaldi, with the greater part of the retinue, was gone, Adrian, divesting himself of his heavy greaves, entered alone the pavilion of the Knight of St. John. Montreal had already doffed all his armor save the breastplate, and he now stepped forward to welcome his guest with the winning and easy grace which better suited his birth than his profession. He received Adrian's excuses for the absence of Annibaldi and the other knights of his train with a smile which seemed to prove how readily he divined the cause, and conducted him to the other and more private division of the pavilion, in which the repast (rendered acceptable by the late exercise of guest and host) was prepared; and here Adrian for the first time discovered Adeline. Long inurement to the various and roving life of her lover, joined to a certain pride which she derived from conscious, though forfeited, rank, gave to the outward manner of that beautiful lady an ease and freedom which often concealed, even from Montreal, her sensitiveness to her unhappy situation. At times, indeed, when alone with Montreal, whom she loved with all the devotion of romance, she was sensible only to the charm of a presence which consoled her for all things; but in his frequent absence, or on the admission of any stranger, the illusion vanished, the reality returned. Poor lady! Nature had not formed, education had not reared, habit had not reconciled, her to the breath of shame!

The young Colonna was much struck by her beauty, and more by her gentle and high-born grace. Like her lord, she appeared younger than she was; time seemed to spare a bloom which an experienced eye might have told was destined to an early

grave; and there was something almost girlish in the lightness of her form, the braided luxuriance of her rich auburn hair, and the color that went and came, not only with every movement, but almost with every word. The contrast between her and Montreal became them both, — it was the contrast of devoted reliance and protecting strength: each looked fairer in the presence of the other: and as Adrian sat down to the well-laden board, he thought he had never seen a pair more formed for the poetic legends of their native Troubadours.

Montreal conversed gayly upon a thousand matters, pressed the wine-flasks, and selected for his guest the most delicate portions of the delicious *spicola* of the neighboring sea, and the rich flesh of the wild boar of the Pontine Marshes.

"Tell me," said Montreal, as their hunger was now appeased, "tell me, noble Adrian, how fares your kinsman, Signor Stephen? A brave old man for his years."

"He bears him as the youngest of us," answered Adrian.

"Late events must have shocked him a little," said Montreal, with an arch smile. "Ah! you look grave, — yet commend my foresight; I was the first who prophesied to thy kinsman the rise of Cola di Rienzi. He seems a great man, — never more great than in conciliating the Colonna and the Orsini."

"The Tribune," returned Adrian, evasively, "is certainly a man of extraordinary genius. And now, seeing him command, my only wonder is how he ever brooked to obey: majesty seems a very part of him."

"Men who win power, easily put on its harness, dignity," answered Montreal; "and if I hear aright — pledge me to your lady's health — the Tribune, if not himself nobly born, will soon be nobly connected."

"He is already married to a Raselli, an old Roman house," replied Adrian.

"You evade my pursuit, — *Le doux soupir! le doux soupir!* as the old Cabestan has it," said Montreal, laughing. "Well, you have pledged me one cup to your lady, pledge another to the fair Irene, the Tribune's sister, — always provided they two are not one. You smile, and shake your head."

"I do not disguise from you, Sir Knight," answered Adrian, "that when my present embassy is over, I trust the alliance between the Tribune and a Colonna will go far towards the benefit of both."

"I have heard rightly, then," said Montreal, in a grave and thoughtful tone. "Rienzi's power must indeed be great."

"Of that my mission is a proof. Are you aware, Signor de Montreal, that Louis, King of Hungary —"

"How! what of him?"

"Has referred the decision of the feud between himself and Johanna of Naples respecting the death of her royal spouse, his brother, to the fiat of the Tribune? This is the first time, methinks, since the death of Constantine that so great a confidence and so high a charge were ever intrusted to a Roman!"

"By all the saints in the calendar," cried Montreal, crossing himself, "this news is indeed amazing! The fierce Louis of Hungary waive the right of the sword and choose other umpire than the field of battle!"

"And this," continued Adrian, in a significant tone, "this it was which induced me to obey your courteous summons. I know, brave Montreal, that you hold intercourse with Louis. Louis has given to the Tribune the best pledge of his amity and alliance; will you do wisely if you —"

"Wage war with the Hungarian's ally?" interrupted Montreal. "This you were about to add: the same thought crossed myself. My lord, pardon me: Italians sometimes invent what they wish. On the honor of a Knight of the Empire, these tidings are the naked truth?"

"By my honor, and on the Cross," answered Adrian, drawing himself up; "and in proof thereof, I am now bound to Naples to settle with the Queen the preliminaries of the appointed trial."

"Two crowned heads before the tribunal of a plebeian, and one a defendant against the charge of murder!" muttered Montreal; "the news might well amaze me!"

He remained musing and silent a little while, till, looking up, he caught Adeline's tender gaze fixed upon him with that deep solicitude with which she watched the outward effect of

schemes and projects she was too soft to desire to know, and too innocent to share.

"Lady mine," said the Provençal, fondly, "how sayest thou? Must we abandon our mountain castle and these wild woodland scenes for the dull walls of a city? I fear me so. The Lady Adeline," he continued, turning to Adrian, "is of a singular bias: she hates the gay crowds of streets and thoroughfares, and esteems no palace like the solitary outlaw's hold. Yet methinks she might outshine all the faces of Italy, — thy mistress, Lord Adrian, of course, excepted."

"It is an exception which only a lover, and that too a betrothed lover, would dare to make," replied Adrian, gallantly.

"Nay," said Adeline, in a voice singularly sweet and clear, "nay, I know well at what price to value my lord's flattery and Signor di Castello's courtesy. But you are bound, Sir Knight, to a court that, if fame speak true, boasts in its Queen the very miracle and mould of beauty."

"It is some years since I saw the Queen of Naples," answered Adrian; "and I little dreamed then, when I gazed upon that angel face, that I should live to hear her accused of the foulest murder that ever stained even Italian royalty."

"And as if resolved to prove her guilt," said Montreal, "ere long be sure she will marry the very man who did the deed. Of this I have certain proof."

Thus conversing, the Knights wore away the daylight, and beheld from the open tent the sun cast his setting glow over the purple sea. Adeline had long retired from the board, and they now saw her seated with her handmaids on a mound by the beach, while the sound of her lute faintly reached their ears. As Montreal caught the air, he turned from the converse, and sighing, half shaded his face with his hand. Somehow or other the two Knights had worn away all the little jealousy or pique which they had conceived against each other at Rome. Both imbued with the soldier-like spirit of the age, their contest in the morning had served to inspire them with that strange kind of respect, and even cordiality, which one brave man even still (how much more at that day!) feels for another, whose courage

he has proved while vindicating his own. It is like the discovery of a congenial sentiment hitherto latent, and in a life of camps often establishes sudden and lasting friendship in the very lap of enmity. This feeling had been ripened by their subsequent familiar intercourse, and was increased on Adrian's side by the feeling that in convincing Montreal of the policy of withdrawing from the Roman territories, he had obtained an advantage that well repaid whatever danger and delay he had undergone.

The sigh and the altered manner of Montreal did not escape Adrian, and he naturally connected it with something relating to her whose music had been its evident cause.

"Yon lovely dame," said he, gently, "touches the lute with an exquisite and fairy hand, and that plaintive air seems to my ear as of the minstrelsy of Provence."

"It is the air I taught her," said Montreal, sadly, "married as it is to indifferent words, with which I first wooed a heart that should never have given itself to me. Ay, young Colonna, many a night has my boat been moored beneath the starlit Sorgia that washes her proud father's halls, and my voice awaked the stillness of the waving sedges with a soldier's serenade. Sweet memories, bitter fruit!"

"Why bitter? ye love each other still."

"But I am vowed to celibacy, and Adeline de Courval is leman where she should be wedded dame. Methinks I fret at that thought even more than she, — dear Adeline!"

"Your lady, as all would guess, is then nobly born?"

"She is," answered Montreal, with a deep and evident feeling which, save in love, rarely, if ever, crossed his hardy breast, "she is. Our tale is a brief one: We loved each other as children. Her family was wealthier than mine; we were separated. I was given to understand that she abandoned me. I despaired, and in despair I took the cross of St. John. Chance threw us again together. I learned that her love was undecayed, poor child! — she was even then, sir, but a child! I wild, reckless, and not unskilled, perhaps, in the arts that woo and win. She could not resist my suit or her own affection; we fled. In those words you see the thread of my after-history.

My sword and my Adeline were all my fortune. Society frowned on us. The Church threatened my soul, the Grand Master my life. I became a knight of fortune. Fate and my right hand favored me. I have made those who scorned me tremble at my name. That name shall yet blaze, a star or a meteor, in the front of troubled nations, and I may yet win by force from the Pontiff the dispensation refused to my prayers. On the same day I may offer Adeline the diadem and the ring. Eno' of this. You marked Adeline's cheek: seems it not delicate? I like not that changeful flush; and she moves languidly, — *her* step that was so blithe!"

"Change of scene and the mild South will soon restore her health," said Adrian; "and in your peculiar life she is so little brought in contact with others, especially of her own sex, that I trust she is but seldom made aware of whatever is painful in her situation. And woman's love, Montreal, as we both have learned, is a robe that wraps her from many a storm!"

"You speak kindly," returned the Knight; "but you know not all our cause of grief. Adeline's father, a proud *sieur*, died, — they said of a broken heart; but old men die of many another disease than that! The mother, a dame who boasted her descent from princes, bore the matter more sternly than the sire, clamored for revenge, — which was odd, for she is as religious as a Dominican, and revenge is not Christian in a woman, though it is knightly in a man! Well, my lord, we had one boy, our only child: he was Adeline's solace in my absence; his pretty ways were worth the world to her! She loved him so that, but he had her eyes and looked like her when he slept, I should have been jealous! He grew up in our wild life strong and comely: the young rogue, he would have been a brave knight! My evil stars led me to Milan, where I had business with the Visconti. One bright morning in June our boy was stolen: verily that June was like a December to us!"

"Stolen! How? By whom?"

"The first question is answered easily. The boy was with his nurse in the courtyard, the idle wench left him for but a minute or two — so she avers — to fetch him some childish toy; when she returned he was gone, — not a trace left, save his

pretty cap with the plume in it! Poor Adeline, many a time have I found her kissing that relic till it was wet with tears!"

"A strange fortune, in truth. But what interest could —"

"I will tell you," interrupted Montreal, "the only conjecture I could form: Adeline's mother, on learning we had a son, sent to Adeline a letter that wellnigh broke her heart, reproaching her for her love to me, and so forth, as if that had made her the vilest of the sex. She bade her take compassion on her child, and not bring him up to a robber's life, — so was she pleased to style the bold career of Walter de Montreal. She offered to rear the child in her own dull halls, and fit him, no doubt, for a shaven pate and a monk's cowl. She chafed much that a mother would not part with her treasure! She alone, partly in revenge, partly in silly compassion for Adeline's child, partly, it may be, from some pious fanaticism, could, it so seemed to me, have robbed us of our boy. On inquiry I learned from the nurse — who but that she was of the same sex as Adeline, should have tasted my dagger — that in their walks a woman of advanced years, but seemingly of humble rank (that might be disguise!) had often stopped, and caressed, and admired the child. I repaired at once to France, sought the old Castle of De Courval; it had passed to the next heir, and the old widow was gone, none knew whither, but, it was conjectured, to take the veil in some remote convent."

"And you never saw her since?"

"Yes, at Rome," answered Montreal, turning pale. "When last there I chanced suddenly upon her; and then at length I learned my boy's fate and the truth of my own surmise, — she confessed to the theft, — and my child was dead! I have not dared to tell Adeline of this; it seems to me as if it would be like plucking the shaft from the wounded side, and she would die at once, bereft of the uncertainty that rankles within her. She has still a hope, — it comforts her; though my heart bleeds when I think on its vanity. Let this pass, my Colonna."

And Montreal started to his feet as if he strove, by a strong effort, to shake off the weakness that had crept over him in his narration.

"Think no more of it. Life is short; its thorns are many:

let us not neglect any of its flowers. This is piety and wisdom too. Nature, that meant me to struggle and to toil, gave me, happily, the sanguine heart and the elastic soul of France; and I have lived long enough to own that to die young is not an evil. Come, Lord Adrian, let us join my lady ere you part, if part you must; the moon will be up soon, and Fondi is but a short journey hence. You know that though I admire not your Petrarch, you with more courtesy laud our Provençal ballads, and you must hear Adeline sing one, that you may prize them the more. The race of the Troubadours is dead, but the minstrelsy survives the minstrel!"

Adrian, who scarce knew what comfort to administer to the affliction of his companion, was somewhat relieved by the change in his mood, though his more grave and sensitive nature was a little startled at its suddenness. But, as we have before seen, Montreal's spirit (and this made perhaps its fascination) was as a varying and changeful sky: the gayest sunshine and the fiercest storm swept over it in rapid alternation; and elements of singular might and grandeur, which, properly directed and concentrated, would have made him the blessing and glory of his time, were wielded with a boyish levity, roused into war and desolation, or lulled into repose and smoothness, with all the suddenness of chance and all the fickleness of caprice.

Sauntering down to the beach, the music of Adeline's lute sounded more distinctly in their ears; and involuntarily they hushed their steps upon the rich and odorous turf as, in a voice, though not powerful, marvellously sweet and clear, and well adapted to the simple fashion of the words and melody, she sang the following stanzas:—

LAY OF THE LADY OF PROVENCE.

1.

Ah, why art thou sad, my heart? Why
 Darksome and lonely?
 Frowns the face of the happy sky
 Over thee only?

Ah me, ah me!

Render to joy the earth !
 Grief shuns, not envies, Mirth ;
 But leave one quiet spot
 Where Mirth may enter not,
 To sigh, Ah me !
 Ah me !

2.

As a bird, though the sky be clear,
 Feels the storm lower,
 My soul bodes the tempest near
 In the sunny hour.

 Ah me, ah me !
 Be glad while yet we may !
 I bid thee, my heart, be gay ;
 And still I know not why, —
 Thou answerest with a sigh,
 (Fond heart !) Ah me ! —
 Ah me !

3.

As this twilight o'er the skies,
 Doubt brings the sorrow ;
 Who knows when the daylight dies,
 What waits the morrow ?

 Ah me, ah me !
 Be blithe, be blithe, my lute,
 Thy strings will soon be mute !
 Be blithe — hark ! while it dies,
 The note forewarning, sighs
 Its last — Ah me ! —
 Ah me !

“My own Adeline, my sweetest night-bird,” half-whispered Montreal, and softly approaching, he threw himself at his lady's feet, “thy song is too sad for this golden eve.”

“No sound ever went to the heart,” said Adrian, “whose arrow was not feathered by sadness. True sentiment, Montreal, is twin with melancholy, though not with gloom.”

The lady looked softly and approvingly up at Adrian's face : she was pleased with its expression ; she was pleased yet more with words of which women rather than men would

acknowledge the truth. Adrian returned the look with one of deep and eloquent sympathy and respect, — in fact, the short story he had heard from Montreal had interested him deeply in her; and never to the brilliant queen, to whose court he was bound, did his manner wear so chivalric and earnest a homage as it did to that lone and ill-fated lady on the twilight shores of Terracina.

Adeline blushed slightly and sighed; and then, to break the awkwardness of a pause which had stolen over them, as Montreal, unheeding the last remark of Adrian, was tuning the strings of the lute, she said: "Of course the Signor di Castello shares the universal enthusiasm for Petrarch?"

"Ay," cried Montreal, "my lady is Petrarch mad, like the rest of them; but all I know is, that never did belted knight and honest lover woo in such fantastic and tortured strains."

"In Italy," answered Adrian, "common language is exaggeration; but even your own Troubadour poetry might tell you that love, ever seeking a new language of its own, cannot but often run into what to all but lovers seems distortion and conceit."

"Come, dear Signor," said Montreal, placing the lute in Adrian's hands, "let Adeline be the umpire between us, which music, yours or mine, can woo the more blandly."

"Ah!" said Adrian, laughing, "I fear me, Sir Knight, you have already bribed the umpire."

Montreal's eyes and Adeline's met, and in that gaze Adeline forgot all her sorrows.

With a practised and skilful hand Adrian touched the strings; and selecting a song which was less elaborate than those mostly in vogue amongst his countrymen, though still conceived in the Italian spirit, and in accordance with the sentiment he had previously expressed to Adeline, he sang as follows:—

LOVE'S EXCUSE FOR SADNESS.

Chide not, beloved, if oft with thee
I feel not rapture wholly;
For aye the heart that's fill'd with love
Runs o'er in melancholy.

To streams that glide in noon, the shade
 From summer skies is given ;
 So if my breast reflects the cloud,
 'Tis but the cloud of heaven !
 Thine image, glass'd within my soul,
 So well the mirror keepeth
 That, chide me not if with the *light*
 The *shadow* also sleepeth.

“And now,” said Adrian, as he concluded, “the lute is to you: I but prelude your prize.”

The Provençal laughed, and shook his head: “With any other umpire I had had my lute broken on my own head for my conceit in provoking such a rival ; but I must not shrink from a contest I have myself provoked, even though in one day *twice* defeated.” And with that, in a deep and exquisitely melodious voice, which wanted only more scientific culture to have challenged any competition, the Knight of St. John poured forth

THE LAY OF THE TROUBADOUR.

I.

Gentle river, the moonbeam is hush'd on thy tide,
 On thy pathway of light to my lady I glide.
 My boat, where the stream laves the castle, I moor, —
 All at rest save the maid and her young Troubadour !
 As the stars to the waters that bore
 My bark, to my spirit thou art ;
 Heaving yet, see it bound to the shore,
 So moor'd to thy beauty my heart, —
 Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

2.

Wilt thou fly from the world ? It hath wealth for the vain ;
 But Love breaks his bond when there 's gold in the chain.
 Wilt thou fly from the world ? It hath courts for the proud ;
 But Love, born in caves, pines to death in the crowd.
 Were this bosom thy world, dearest one,
 Thy world could not fail to be bright ;
 For thou shouldst thyself be its sun,
 And what spot could be dim in thy light, —
 Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie ?

3.

The rich and the great woo thee, dearest ; and poor,
 Though his fathers were princes, thy young Troubadour !
 But his heart never quail'd, save to thee, his ador'd ;
 There 's no guile in his lute, and no stain on his sword.

Ah ! I reckon not what sorrows I know,

Could I still on thy solace confide ;

And I care not, though earth be my foe,

If thy soft heart be found by my side, —

Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

4.

The maiden she blush'd, and the maiden she sigh'd.
 Not a cloud in the sky, not a gale on the tide ;
 But though tempest had rag'd on the wave and the wind,
 That castle, methinks, had been still left behind !

Sweet lily, though bow'd by the blast

(To this bosom transplanted) since then,

Wouldst thou change, could we call the past,

To the rock from thy garden again, —

Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie ?

Thus they alternated the time with converse and song as the wooded hills threw their sharp, long shadows over the sea ; while from many a mound of waking flowers, and many a copse of citron and orange, relieved by the dark and solemn aloe, stole the summer breeze, laden with mingled odors ; and over the seas, colored by the slow-fading hues of purple and rose, that the sun had long bequeathed to the twilight, flitted the gay fire-flies that sparkle along that enchanted coast. At length the moon slowly rose above the dark forest-steeps, gleaming on the gay pavilion and glittering pennon of Montreal, on the verdant sward, the polished mail of the soldiers, stretched on the grass in various groups, half-shaded by oaks and cypress, and the war-steeds grazing peaceably together, — a wild mixture of the Pastoral and the Iron time.

Adrian, reluctantly reminded of his journey, rose to depart.

"I fear," said he to Adeline, "that I have already detained you too late in the night air ; but selfishness is little considerate."

"Nay, you see we are prudent," said Adeline, pointing to Montreal's mantle, which his provident hand had long since drawn around her form; "but if you must part, farewell, and success attend you!"

"We may meet again, I trust," said Adrian.

Adeline sighed gently; and the Colonna, gazing on her face by the moonlight, to which it was slightly raised, was painfully struck by its almost transparent delicacy. Moved by his compassion, ere he mounted his steed he drew Montreal aside. "Forgive me if I seem presumptuous," said he; "but to one so noble this wild life is scarce a fitting career. I know that in our time War consecrates all his children; but surely a settled rank in the court of the Emperor, or an honorable reconciliation with your knightly brethren, were better —"

"Than a Tartar camp and a brigand's castle," interrupted Montreal, with some impatience: "this you were about to say. You are mistaken. Society thrust me from her bosom: let society take the fruit it hath sown. 'A fixed rank,' say you? Some subaltern office, to fight at other men's command! You know me not: Walter de Montreal was not formed to obey. War when I will, and rest when I list, is the motto of my escutcheon. Ambition proffers me rewards you wot not of; and I am of the mould, as of the race, of those whose swords have conquered thrones. For the rest, your news of the alliance of Louis of Hungary with your Tribune makes it necessary for the friend of Louis to withdraw from all feud with Rome. Ere the week expire, the owl and the bat may seek refuge in yon gray turrets."

"But your lady?"

"Is inured to change. God help her, and temper the rough wind to the lamb!"

"Enough, Sir Knight; but should you desire a sure refuge at Rome for one so gentle and so high-born, by the right hand of a knight I promise a safe roof and an honored home to the Lady Adeline."

Montreal pressed the offered hand to his heart; then plucking his own hastily away, drew it across his eyes and joined Adeline, in a silence that showed he dared not trust himself to

speak. In a few moments Adrian and his train were on the march; but still the young Colonna turned back, to gaze once more on his wild host and that lovely lady, as they themselves lingered on the moonlit sward, while the sea rippled mournfully on their ears.

It was not many months after that date that the name of Fra Moreale scattered terror and dismay throughout the fair Campania. The right hand of the Hungarian king in his invasion of Naples, he was chosen afterwards vicar (or vicegerent) of Louis in Aversa; and fame and fate seemed to lead him triumphantly along that ambitious career which he had elected, whether bounded by the scaffold or the throne.

BOOK IV.

THE TRIUMPH AND THE POMP.

ALLORA fama e paura di sì buono reggimento passa in ogni terra. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 21.

Then the fame and the fear of that so good government passed into every land. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY ANGELO — THE DREAM OF NINA FULFILLED.

THE thread of my story transports us back to Rome. It was in a small chamber, in a ruinous mansion by the base of Mount Aventine, that a young boy sat, one evening, with a woman of a tall and stately form, but somewhat bowed both by infirmity and years. The boy was of a fair and comely presence, and there was that in his bold, frank, undaunted carriage which made him appear older than he was.

The old woman, seated in the recess of the deep window, was apparently occupied with a Bible that lay open on her knees; but ever and anon she lifted her eyes and gazed on her young companion with a sad and anxious expression.

"Dame," said the boy, who was busily employed in hewing out a sword of wood, "I would you had seen the show to-day. Why, every day is a show at Rome now! It is show enough to see the Tribune himself on his white steed — oh, it is so beautiful — with his white robes all studded with jewels. But to-day, as I have just been telling you, the Lady Nina took notice of me as I stood on the stairs of the Capitol: you know, dame, I had donned my best blue velvet doublet."

"And she called you a fair boy, and asked if you would be her little page; and this has turned thy brain, silly urchin that thou art —"

"But the words are the least; if you saw the Lady Nina, you would own that a smile from her might turn the wisest head in Italy. Oh, how I should like to serve the Tribune! All the lads of my age are mad for him. How they will stare, and envy me at school to-morrow! You know too, dame, that though I was not always brought up at Rome, I am Roman. Every Roman loves Rienzi."

"Ay, for the hour; the cry will soon change. This vanity of thine, Angelo, vexes my old heart. I would thou wert humbler."

"Bastards have their own name to win," said the boy, coloring deeply. "They twit me in the teeth because I cannot say who my father and mother were."

"They need not," returned the dame, hastily. "Thou comest of noble blood and long descent, though, as I have told thee often, I know not the exact names of thy parents. But what art thou shaping that rough sapling of oak into?"

"A sword, dame, to assist the Tribune against the robbers."

"Alas! I fear me, like all those who seek power in Italy, he is more likely to enlist robbers than to assail them."

"Why, la you there, you live so shut up that you know and hear nothing, or you would have learned that even that fiercest of all the robbers, Fra Moreale, has at length yielded to the Tribune and fled from his castle, like a rat from a falling house."

"How, how!" cried the dame; "what say you? Has this plebeian, whom you call the Tribune, has he boldly thrown the gage to that dread warrior, and has Montreal left the Roman territory?"

"Ay, it is the talk of the town. But Fra Moreale seems as much a bugbear to you as to e'er a mother in Rome. Did he ever wrong you, dame?"

"Yes!" exclaimed the old woman, with so abrupt a fierceness that even that hardy boy was startled.

"I wish I could meet him, then," said he, after a pause, as he flourished his mimic weapon.

"Now Heaven forbid! He is a man ever to be shunned by thee, whether for peace or war. Say again this good Tribune holds no terms with the Free Lances."

"Say it again, — why all Rome knows it."

"He is pious too, I have heard; and they do bruit it that he sees visions, and is comforted from above," said the woman, speaking to herself. Then, turning to Angelo, she continued: "Thou wouldst like greatly to accept the Lady Nina's proffer?"

"Ah! that I should, dame, if you could spare me."

"Child," replied the matron, solemnly, "my sand is nearly run, and my wish is to see thee placed with one who will nurture thy young years and save thee from a life of license. That done, I may fulfil my vow and devote the desolate remnant of my years to God. I will think more of this, my child. Not under such a plebeian's roof shouldst thou have lodged, nor from a stranger's board been fed; but at Rome my last relative worthy of the trust is dead, and, at the worst, obscure honesty is better than gaudy crime. Thy spirit troubles me already. Back, my child; I must to my closet, and watch and pray."

Thus saying, the old woman, repelling the advance and silencing the muttered and confused words of the boy, — half affectionate as they were, yet half tetchy and wayward, — glided from the chamber.

The boy looked abstractedly at the closing door, and then said to himself: "The dame is always talking riddles: I wonder if she knows more of me than she tells, or if she is any way akin to me. I hope not, for I don't love her much, — nor, for that matter, anything else. I wish she would place me with the Tribune's lady, and then we'll see who among the lads will call Angelo Villani bastard."

With that the boy fell to work again at his sword with redoubled vigor. In fact, the cold manner of this female, his sole nurse, companion, substitute for parent, had repelled his affections without subduing his temper; and though not origi-

nally of evil disposition, Angelo Villani was already insolent, cunning, and revengeful, — but not, on the other hand, without a quick susceptibility to kindness as to affront, a natural acuteness of understanding, and a great indifference to fear. Brought up in quiet affluence rather than luxury, and living much with his protector, whom he knew but by the name of Ursula, his bearing was graceful, and his air that of the well-born. And it was his carriage, perhaps, rather than his countenance, which though handsome, was more distinguished for intelligence than beauty, which had attracted the notice of the Tribune's bride. His education was that of one reared for some scholastic profession. He was not only taught to read and write, but had been even instructed in the rudiments of Latin. He did not, however, incline to these studies half so fondly as to the games of his companions, or the shows or riots in the streets, into all of which he managed to thrust himself, and from which he had always the happy dexterity to return safe and unscathed.

The next morning Ursula entered the young Angelo's chamber. "Wear again thy blue doublet to-day," said she; "I would have thee look thy best. Thou shalt go with me to the palace."

"What, to-day?" cried the boy joyfully, half leaping from his bed. "Dear dame Ursula, shall I really, then, belong to the train of the great Tribune's lady?"

"Yes; and leave the old woman to die alone! Your joy becomes you, — but ingratitude is in your blood. Ingratitude! Oh! it has burned my heart into ashes; and yours, boy, can no longer find a fuel in the dry, crumbling cinders."

"Dear dame, you are always so biting. You know you said you wished to retire into a convent, and I was too troublesome a charge for you. But you delight in rebuking me, justly or unjustly."

"My task is over," said Ursula, with a deep-drawn sigh.

The boy answered not; and the old woman retired with a heavy step, and, it may be, a heavier heart. When he joined her in their common apartment, he observed what his joy had previously blinded him to, — that Ursula did not wear her

usual plain and sober dress. The gold chain, rarely assumed then by women not of noble birth, — though in the other sex affected also by public functionaries and wealthy merchants, — glittered upon a robe of the rich flowered stuffs of Venice, and the clasps that confined the vest at the throat and waist were adorned with jewels of no common price.

Angelo's eye was struck by the change, but he felt a more manly pride in remarking that the old lady became it well. Her air and mien were indeed those of one to whom such garments were habitual; and they seemed that day more than usually austere and stately.

She smoothed the boy's ringlets, drew his short mantle more gracefully over his shoulder, and then placed in his belt a poniard whose handle was richly studded, and a purse well filled with florins.

"Learn to use both discreetly," said she; "and whether I live or die, you will never require to wield the poniard to procure the gold."

"This, then," cried Angelo, enchanted, "is a real poniard to fight the robbers with! Ah, with this I should not fear Fra Moreale, who wronged thee so. I trust I may yet avenge thee, though thou didst rate me so just now for ingratitude."

"I *am* avenged. Nourish not such thoughts, my son; they are sinful, — at least I fear so. Draw to the board and eat; we will go betimes, as petitioners should do."

Angelo had soon finished his morning meal, and sallying with Ursula to the porch, he saw, to his surprise, four of those servitors who then usually attended persons of distinction, and who were to be hired in every city, for the convenience of strangers or the holiday ostentation of the gayer citizens.

"How grand we are to-day!" said he, clapping his hands with an eagerness which Ursula failed not to reprove.

"It is not for vain show," she added, "which true nobility can well dispense with, but that we may the more readily gain admittance to the palace. These princes of yesterday are not easy of audience to the over humble."

"Oh! but you are wrong this time," said the boy. "The Tribune gives audience to all men, the poorest as the richest.

Nay, there is not a ragged boor or a bare-footed friar who does not win access to him sooner than the proudest baron. That's why the people love him so. And he devotes one day of the week to receiving the widows and the orphans,—and you know, dame, I am an orphan."

Ursula, already occupied with her own thoughts, did not answer, and scarcely heard, the boy; but leaning on his young arm, and preceded by the footmen to clear the way, passed slowly towards the palace of the Capitol.

A wonderful thing would it have been to a more observant eye to note the change which two or three short months of the stern but salutary and wise rule of the Tribune had effected in the streets of Rome. You no longer beheld the gaunt and mail-clad forms of foreign mercenaries stalking through the vistas, or grouped in lazy insolence before the embattled porches of some gloomy palace. The shops, that in many quarters had been closed for years, were again open, glittering with wares and bustling with trade. The thoroughfares, formerly either silent as death or crossed by some affrighted and solitary passenger with quick steps, and eyes that searched every corner, or resounding with the roar of a pauper rabble or the open feuds of savage nobles, now exhibited the regular and wholesome and mingled streams of civilized life, whether bound to pleasure or to commerce. Carts and wagons, laden with goods which had passed in safety by the dismantled holds of the robbers of the Campagna, rattled cheerfully over the pathways. "Never, perhaps,"—to use the translation adapted from the Italian authorities by a modern and by no means a partial historian,¹—"never, perhaps, has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden reformation of Rome by the Tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent. 'In this time,' says the historian,² 'did the woods begin to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries;'³

¹ Gibbon.

² *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. c. 9.

³ Gibbon; the words in the original are *li pellegrini cominciaro a fere la cerca per la santuarìa*.

the roads and inns were replenished with travellers : trade, plenty, and good faith were restored in the markets ; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highways.' ”

Amidst all these evidences of comfort and security to the people some dark and discontented countenances might be seen mingled in the crowd ; and whenever one who wore the livery of the Colonna or the Orsini felt himself jostled by the throng, a fierce hand moved involuntarily to the sword-belt, and a half-suppressed oath was ended with an indignant sigh. Here and there too — contrasting the redecorated, refurnished, and smiling shops — heaps of rubbish before the gate of some haughty mansion testified the abasement of fortifications, which the owner inpotently resented as a sacrilege. Through such streets and such throngs did the party we accompany wend their way, till they found themselves amidst crowds assembled before the entrance of the Capitol. The officers there stationed kept, however, so discreet and dexterous an order that they were not long detained ; and now, in the broad place or court of that memorable building, they saw the open doors of the great justice-hall, guarded but by a single sentinel, and in which, for six hours daily, did the Tribune hold his court ; for, “ patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger.”¹

Not, however, to that hall did the party bend its way, but to the entrance which admitted to the private apartments of the palace. And here the pomp, the gaud, the more than regal magnificence of the residence of the Tribune, strongly contrasted the patriarchal simplicity which marked his justice court.

Even Ursula, not unaccustomed, of yore to the luxurious state of Italian and French principalities, seemed roused into surprise at the hall crowded with retainers in costly liveries, the marble and gilded columns wreathed with flowers, and the gorgeous banners, wrought with the blended arms of the Republican City and the Pontifical See, which blazed aloft and around.

¹ Gibbon.

Scarce knowing whom to address in such an assemblage, Ursula was relieved from her perplexity by an officer attired in a suit of crimson and gold, who, with a grave and formal decorum, which indeed reigned throughout the whole retinue, demanded, respectfully, whom she sought. "The Signora Nina!" replied Ursula, drawing up her stately person with a natural, though somewhat antiquated, dignity. There was something foreign in the accent, which influenced the officer's answer.

"To-day, madam, I fear that the Signora receives only the Roman ladies. To-morrow is that appointed for all foreign dames of distinction."

Ursula, with a slight impatience of tone, replied: "My business is of that nature which is welcome on any day at palaces. I come, Signor, to lay certain presents at the Signora's feet, which I trust she will deign to accept."

"And say, Signor," added the boy, abruptly, "that Angelo Villani, whom the Lady Nina honored yesterday with her notice, is no stranger, but a Roman, and comes, as she bade him, to proffer to the Signora his homage and devotion."

The grave officer could not refrain a smile at the pert, yet not ungraceful, boldness of the boy.

"I remember me, Master Angelo Villani," he replied, "that the Lady Nina spoke to you by the great staircase. Madam, I will do your errand. Please to follow me to an apartment more fitting your sex and seeming."

With that the officer led the way across the hall to a broad staircase of white marble, along the centre of which were laid those rich Eastern carpets which at that day, when rushes strewed the chambers of an English monarch, were already common to the greater luxury of Italian palaces. Opening a door at the first flight, he ushered Ursula and her young charge into a lofty ante-chamber hung with arras of wrought velvets; while over the opposite door, through which the officer now vanished, were blazoned the armorial bearings which the Tribune so constantly introduced in all his pomp, not more from the love of show than from his politic desire

to mingle with the keys of the Pontiff the heraldic insignia of the Republic.

"Philip of Valois is not housed like this man!" muttered Ursula. "If this last, I shall have done better for my charge than I recked of."

The officer soon returned, and led them across an apartment of vast extent, which was indeed the great reception-chamber of the palace. Four and twenty columns of the Oriental alabaster which had attested the spoils of the later Emperors, and had been disinterred from forgotten ruins to grace the palace of the Reviver of the old Republic, supported the light roof, which, half Gothic, half classic, in its architecture, was inlaid with gilded and purple mosaics. The tessellated floor was covered in the centre with cloth of gold, the walls were clothed, at intervals, with the same gorgeous hangings, relieved by panels freshly painted in the most glowing colors, with mystic and symbolical designs. At the upper end of this royal chamber, two steps ascended to the place of the Tribune's throne, above which was the canopy wrought with the eternal armorial bearings of the Pontiff and the City.

Traversing this apartment, the officer opened the door at its extremity, which admitted to a small chamber crowded with pages in rich dresses of silver and blue velvet. There were few amongst them older than Angelo, and from their general beauty they seemed the very flower and blossom of the city.

Short time had Angelo to gaze on his comrades that were to be; another minute, and he and his protectress were in the presence of the Tribune's bride.

The chamber was not large, but it was large enough to prove that the beautiful daughter of Raselli had realized her visions of vanity and splendor.

It was an apartment that mocked description; it seemed a cabinet for the gems of the world. The daylight, shaded by high and deep-set casements of stained glass, streamed in a purple and mellow hue over all that the art of that day boasted most precious, or regal luxury held most dear. The candelabras of the silver workmanship of Florence; the carpets and stuffs of the East; the draperies of Venice and

Genoa; paintings like the illuminated missals, wrought in gold and those lost colors of blue and crimson; antique marbles which spoke of the bright days of Athens; tables of disinterred mosaics, their freshness preserved as by magic; censers of gold that steamed with the odors of Araby, yet so subdued as not to deaden the healthier scent of flowers, which blushed in every corner from their marble and alabaster vases; a small and spirit-like fountain, which seemed to gush from among wreaths of roses, diffusing in its diamond and fairy spray a scarce felt coolness to the air, — all these, and such as these, which it were vain work to detail, congregated in the richest luxuriance, harmonized with the most exquisite taste, uniting the ancient arts with the modern, amazed and intoxicated the sense of the beholder. It was not so much the cost, nor the luxury, that made the character of the chamber, it was a certain gorgeous and almost sublime phantasy; so that it seemed rather the fabled retreat of an enchantress, at whose word genii ransacked the earth and fairies arranged the produce, than the grosser splendor of an earthly queen. Behind the piled cushions upon which Nina half reclined, stood four girls, beautiful as nymphs, with fans of the rarest feathers; and at her feet lay one older than the rest, whose lute, though now silent, attested her legitimate occupation.

But had the room in itself seemed somewhat too fantastic and overcharged in its prodigal ornaments, the form and face of Nina would at once have rendered all appropriate, so completely did she seem the natural Spirit of the Place, so wonderfully did her beauty, elated as it now was with contented love, gratified vanity, exultant hope, body forth the brightest vision that ever floated before the eyes of Tasso when he wrought into one immortal shape the glory of the Enchantress with the allurements of the Woman.

Nina half rose as she saw Ursula, whose sedate and mournful features involuntarily testified her surprise and admiration at a loveliness so rare and striking, but who, undazzled by the splendor around, soon recovered her wonted self-composure, and seated herself on the cushion to which Nina pointed, while the young visitor remained standing, and spell-bound

by childish wonder, in the centre of the apartment. Nina recognized him with a smile.

"Ah! my pretty boy, whose quick eye and bold air caught my fancy yesterday, have you come to accept my offer? Is it you, madam, who claim this fair child?"

"Lady," replied Ursula, "my business here is brief: by a train of events, needless to weary you with narrating, this boy from his infancy fell to my charge, — a weighty and anxious trust to one whose thoughts are beyond the barrier of life. I have reared him as became a youth of gentle blood; for on both sides, lady, he is noble, though an orphan, motherless and sireless."

"Poor child!" said Nina, compassionately.

"Growing now," continued Ursula, "oppressed by years, and desirous only to make my peace with heaven, I journeyed hither some months since, in the design to place the boy with a relation of mine; and, that trust fulfilled, to take the vows in the City of the Apostle. Alas! I found my kinsman dead, and a baron of wild and dissolute character was his heir. Here remaining, perplexed and anxious, it seemed to me the voice of Providence when, yester-evening, the child told me you had been pleased to honor him with your notice. Like the rest of Rome, he has already learned enthusiasm for the Tribune, devotion to the Tribune's bride. Will you, in truth, admit him of your household? He will not dishonor your protection by his blood, nor, I trust, by his bearing."

"I would take his face for his guarantee, madam, even without so distinguished a recommendation as your own. Is he Roman? His name then must be known to me."

"Pardon me, lady," replied Ursula; "he bears the name of Angelo Villani, — not that of his sire or mother. The honor of a noble house forever condemns his parentage to rest unknown. He is the offspring of a love unsanctioned by the Church."

"He is the more to be loved, then, and to be pitied, — victim of sin not his own!" answered Nina, with moistened eyes, as she saw the deep and burning blush that covered the boy's cheeks.

"With the Tribune's reign commences a new era of nobility,

when rank and knighthood shall be won by a man's own merit, not that of his ancestors. Fear not, madam; in my house he shall know no slight."

Ursula was moved from her pride by the kindness of Nina; she approached with involuntary reverence, and kissed the Signora's hand.

"May our Lady reward your noble heart!" said she. "And now my mission is ended, and my earthly goal is won. Add only, lady, to your inestimable favors, one more. These jewels" — and Ursula drew from her robe a casket, touched the spring, and the lid flying back, discovered jewels of great size and the most brilliant water — "these jewels," she continued, laying the casket at Nina's feet, "once belonging to the princely house of Thoulouse, are valueless to me and mine. Suffer me to think that they are transferred to one whose queenly brow will give them a lustre it cannot borrow."

"How!" said Nina, coloring very deeply; "think you, madam, my kindness can be bought? What woman's kindness ever was? Nay, nay; take back the gifts, or I shall pray you to take back your boy."

Ursula was astonished and confounded; to her experience such abstinence was a novelty, and she scarcely knew how to meet it. Nina perceived her embarrassment with a haughty and triumphant smile, and then, regaining her former courtesy of demeanor, said, with a grave sweetness, —

"The Tribune's hands are clean: the Tribune's wife must not be suspected. Rather, madam, should I press upon *you* some token of exchange for the fair charge you have committed to me. Your jewels hereafter may profit the boy in his career: reserve them for one who needs them."

"No, lady," said Ursula, rising, and lifting her eyes to heaven; "they shall buy masses for his mother's soul: for him I shall reserve a competence when his years require it. Lady, accept the thanks of a wretched and desolate heart. Fare you well!"

She turned to quit the room, but with so faltering and weak a step that Nina, touched and affected, sprang up, and with her own hand guided the old woman across the room, whispering

comfort and soothing to her; while, as they reached the door, the boy rushed forward, and, clasping Ursula's robe, sobbed out: "Dear dame, not one farewell for your little Angelo? Forgive him all he has cost you! Now, for the first time, I feel how wayward and thankless I have been."

The old woman caught him in her arms and kissed him passionately; when the boy, as if a thought suddenly struck him, drew forth the purse she had given him, and said, in a choked and scarce articulate voice: "And let this, dearest dame, go in masses for my poor *father's* soul; for *he* is dead too, you know!"

These words seemed to freeze at once all the tenderer emotions of Ursula. She put back the boy with the same chilling and stern severity of aspect and manner which had so often before repressed him; and recovering her self-possession, at once quitted the apartment without saying another word. Nina, surprised, but still pitying her sorrow and respecting her age, followed her steps across the pages' ante-room and the reception-chamber, even to the foot of the stairs, — a condescension the haughtiest princess of Rome could not have won from her; and returning, saddened and thoughtful, she took the boy's hand and affectionately kissed his forehead.

"Poor boy!" she said, "it seems as if Providence had made me select thee yesterday from the crowd, and thus conducted thee to thy proper refuge. For to whom should come the friendless and the orphans of Rome, but to the palace of Rome's first Magistrate?" Turning then to her attendants, she gave them instructions as to the personal comforts of her new charge, which evinced that if power had ministered to her vanity, it had not steeled her heart. Angelo Villani lived to repay her *well*!

She retained the boy in her presence; and conversing with him familiarly, she was more and more pleased with his bold spirit and frank manner. Their conversation was however interrupted, as the day advanced, by the arrival of several ladies of the Roman nobility. And then it was that Nina's virtues receded into shade and her faults appeared. She could not resist the woman's triumph over those arrogant signoras

who now cringed in homage where they had once slighted with disdain. She affected the manner of, she demanded the respect due to, a queen, and by many of those dexterous arts which the sex know so well, she contrived to render her very courtesy a humiliation to her haughty guests. Her commanding beauty and her graceful intellect saved her, indeed, from the vulgar insolence of the upstart, but yet more keenly stung the pride, by forbidding to those she mortified the retaliation of contempt. Hers were the covert taunt, the smiling affront, the sarcasm in the mask of compliment, the careless exaction of respect in trifles, which could not outwardly be resented, but which could not inly be forgiven.

"Fair day to the Signora Colonna!" said she to the proud wife of the proud Stephen. "We passed your palace yesterday. How fair it now seems, relieved from those gloomy battlements which it must often have saddened you to gaze upon. Signora," turning to one of the Orsini, "your lord has high favor with the Tribune, who destines him to great command. His fortunes are secured, and we rejoice at it; for no man more loyally serves the state. Have you seen, fair Lady of Frangipani, the last verses of Petrarch in honor of my lord? They rest yonder. May we so far venture as to request you to point out their beauties to the Signora di Savelli? We rejoice, noble Lady of Malatesta, to observe that your eyesight is so well restored. The last time we met, though we stood next to you in the revels of the Lady Giulia, you seemed scarce to distinguish us from the pillar by which we stood!"

"Must this insolence be endured?" whispered the Signora Frangipani to the Signora Malatesta.

"Hush, hush!—if ever it be *our* day again!"

CHAPTER II.

THE BLESSING OF A COUNCILLOR WHOSE INTERESTS AND
HEART ARE OUR OWN. — THE STRAWS THROWN UPWARD
— DO THEY PORTEND A STORM?

It was later that day than usual when Rienzi returned from his tribunal to the apartments of the palace. As he traversed the reception-hall his countenance was much flushed; his teeth were set firmly, like a man who has taken a strong resolution from which he will not be moved; and his brow was dark with that settled and fearful frown which the describers of his personal appearance have not failed to notice as the characteristic of an anger the more deadly because invariably just. Close at his heels followed the Bishop of Orvietto and the aged Stephen Colonna. "I tell you, my lords," said Rienzi, "that ye plead in vain. Rome knows no distinction between ranks. The law is blind to the agent — lynx-eyed to the deed."

"Yet," said Raimond, hesitatingly, "bethink thee, Tribune: the nephew of two cardinals, and himself once a senator."

Rienzi halted abruptly, and faced his companions. "My Lord Bishop," said he, "does not this make the crime more inexcusable? Look you, thus it reads: A vessel from Avignon to Naples, charged with the revenues of Provence to Queen Johanna, on whose cause, mark you, we now hold solemn council, is wrecked at the mouth of the Tiber; with that, Martino di Porto — a noble, as you say — the holder of that fortress whence he derives his title, doubly bound, by gentle blood and by immediate neighborhood, to succor the oppressed, falls upon the vessel with his troops — what hath the rebel with armed troops? — and pillages the vessel like a common robber. He is apprehended, brought to my tribunal, receives fair trial, is condemned to die. Such is the law: what more would ye have?"

"Mercy," said the Colonna.

Rienzi folded his arms and laughed disdainfully. "I never heard my Lord Colonna plead for mercy when a peasant had stolen the bread that was to feed his famishing children."

"Between a peasant and a prince, Tribune, I, for one, recognize a distinction; the bright blood of an Orsini is not to be shed like that of a base plebeian —"

"Which, I remember me," said Rienzi, in a low voice, "you deemed small matter enough when my boy-brother fell beneath the wanton spear of your proud son. Wake not that memory, I warn you; let it sleep. For shame, old Colonna; for shame! so near the grave, where the worm levels all flesh, and preaching, with those gray hairs, the uncharitable distinction between man and man. Is there not distinction enough at the best? Does not one wear purple, and the other rags? Hath not one ease, and the other toil? Doth not the one banquet while the other starves? Do I nourish any mad scheme to level the ranks which society renders a necessary evil? No. I war no more with Dives than with Lazarus. But before man's judgment-seat, as before God's, Lazarus and Dives are made equal. No more."

Colonna drew his robe round him with great haughtiness, and bit his lip in silence. Raimond interposed.

"All this is true, Tribune. But," and he drew Rienzi aside, "you know we must be politic as well as just. Nephew to two cardinals, what enmity will not this provoke at Avignon!"

"Vex not yourself, holy Raimond! I will answer it to the Pontiff." While they spoke, the bell tolled heavily and loudly.

Colonna started.

"Great Tribune," said he, with a slight sneer, "deign to pause ere it be too late. I know not that I ever before bent to you a suppliant, and I ask you now to spare mine own foe. Stephen Colonna prays Cola di Rienzi to spare the life of an Orsini."

"I understand thy taunt, old lord," said Rienzi, calmly, "but I resent it not. You are foe to the Orsini, yet you plead for him, — it sounds generous; but hark you, you are more a friend to your order than a foe to your rival. You cannot bear that

one, great enough to have contended with you, should perish like a thief. I give full praise to such noble forgiveness; but I am no noble, and I do not sympathize with it. One word more: if this were the sole act of fraud and violence that this bandit baron had committed, your prayers should plead for him; but is not his life notorious? Has he not been from boyhood the terror and disgrace of Rome? How many matrons violated, merchants pillaged, peaceful men stilettoed in the daylight, rise in dark witness against the prisoner? And for such a man do I live to hear an aged prince and a pope's vicar plead for mercy? Fie, fie! But I will be even with ye. The next poor man whom the law sentences to death, for your sake will I pardon."

Raimond again drew aside the Tribune, while Colonna struggled to suppress his rage.

"My friend," said the Bishop, "the nobles will feel this as an insult to their whole order; the very pleading of Orsini's worst foe must convince thee of this. Martino's blood will seal their reconciliation with each other, and they will be as one man against thee."

"Be it so; with God and the People on my side, I will dare, though a Roman, to be just. The bell ceases,—you are already too late." So saying, Rienzi threw open the casement; and by the Staircase of the Lion rose a gibbet, from which swung with a creaking sound, arrayed in his patrician robes, the yet palpitating corpse of Martino di Porto.

"Behold!" said the Tribune, sternly; "thus die all robbers. For *traitors*, the same law has the axe and the scaffold!"

Raimond drew back and turned pale. Not so the veteran noble. Tears of wounded pride started from his eyes; he approached, leaning on his staff, to Rienzi, touched him on his shoulder, and said,—

"Tribune, a judge has lived to envy his victim!"

Rienzi turned with an equal pride to the Baron.

"We forgive idle words in the aged. My lord, have you done with us? We would be alone."

"Give me thy arm, Raimond," said Stephen. "Tribune, farewell! Forget that the Colonna sued thee,—an easy task,

methinks; for, wise as you are, you forget what every one else can remember."

"Ay, my lord, what?"

"Birth, Tribune, birth; that's all!"

"The Signor Colonna has taken up my old calling, and turned a wit," returned Rienzi, with an indifferent and easy tone.

Then, following Raimond and Stephen with his eyes till the door closed upon them, he muttered, "Insolent! were it not for Adrian, thy gray beard should not bear thee harmless. Birth! what Colonna would not boast himself, if he could, the grandson of an emperor? Old man, there is danger in thee which must be watched." With that he turned musingly towards the casement, and again that grisly spectacle of death met his eye. The people below, assembled in large concourse, rejoiced at the execution of one whose whole life had been infamy and rapine, but who had seemed beyond justice, with all the fierce clamor that marks the exultation of the rabble over a crushed foe. And where Rienzi stood, he heard their shouts of "Long live the Tribune, the just judge, Rome's liberator!" But at that time other thoughts deafened his senses to the popular enthusiasm.

"My poor brother!" he said with tears in his eyes, "it was owing to this man's crimes, and to a crime almost similar to that for which he has now suffered, that thou wert entrained to the slaughter; and they who had no pity for the lamb, clamor for compassion to the wolf! Ah! wert thou living now, how these proud heads would bend to thee; though dead, thou wert not worthy of a thought. God rest thy gentle soul, and keep my ambition pure as it was when we walked at twilight, side by side together!"

The Tribune shut the casement, and turning away, sought the chamber of Nina. On hearing his step without, she had already risen from the couch, her eyes sparkling, her bosom heaving; and as he entered, she threw herself on his neck, and murmured as she nestled to his breast, — "Ah, the hours since we parted!"

It was a singular thing to see that proud lady, proud of her beauty, her station, her new honors, — whose gorgeous vanity

was already the talk of Rome and the reproach to Rienzi, — how suddenly and miraculously she seemed changed in his presence! Blushing and timid, all pride in herself seemed merged in her proud love for him. No woman ever loved to the full extent of the passion who did not venerate where she loved, and who did not feel humbled — delighted in that humility — by her exaggerated and overweening estimate of the superiority of the object of her worship.

And it might be the consciousness of this distinction between himself and all other created things which continued to increase the love of the Tribune to his bride, to blind him to her failings towards others, and to indulge her in a magnificence of parade which, though to a certain point politic to assume, was carried to an extent which, if it did not conspire to produce his downfall, has served the Romans with an excuse for their own cowardice and desertion, and historians with a plausible explanation of causes they had not the industry to fathom. Rienzi returned his wife's caresses with an equal affection; and bending down to her beautiful face, the sight was sufficient to chase from his brow the emotions, whether severe or sad, which had lately darkened its broad expanse.

"Thou hast not been abroad this morning, Nina!"

"No, the heat was oppressive. But nevertheless, Cola, I have not lacked company, — half the matronage of Rome has crowded the palace."

"Ah! I warrant it. But yon boy, is he not a new face?"

"Hush, Cola! speak to him kindly, I entreat; of his story anon. Angelo, approach! You see your new master, the Tribune of Rome."

Angelo approached with a timidity not his wont; for an air of majesty was at all times natural to Rienzi, and since his power it had naturally taken a graver and austerer aspect, which impressed those who approached him, even the ambassadors of princes, with a certain involuntary awe. The Tribune smiled at the effect he saw he had produced, and being by temper fond of children, and affable to all but the great, he hastened to dispel it. He took the child affectionately in his arms, kissed him, and bade him welcome.

"May we have a son as fair!" he whispered to Nina, who blushed, and turned away.

"Thy name, my little friend?"

"Angelo Villani."

"A Tuscan name. There is a man of letters at Florence, doubtless writing our annals from hearsay at this moment, called Villani, — perhaps akin to thee?"

"I have no kin," said the boy, bluntly; "and therefore I shall the better love the Signora and honor you, if you will let me. I am Roman: all the Roman boys honor Rienzi."

"Do they, my brave lad?" said the Tribune, coloring with pleasure. "That is a good omen of my continued prosperity." He put down the boy, and threw himself on the cushions, while Nina placed herself on a kind of low stool beside him.

"Let us be alone," said he; and Nina motioned to the attendant maidens to withdraw.

"Take my new page with you," said she; "he is yet, perhaps, too fresh from home to enjoy the company of his giddy brethren."

When they were alone, Nina proceeded to narrate to Rienzi the adventure of the morning; but though he seemed outwardly to listen, his gaze was on vacancy, and he was evidently abstracted and self-absorbed. At length, as she concluded, he said, "Well, Nina, you have acted as ever, kindly and nobly. Let us to other themes. I am in danger."

"Danger!" echoed Nina, turning pale.

"Why, the word must not appal you! you have a spirit like mine, that scorns fear, — and, for that reason, Nina, in all Rome you are my only confidant. It was not only to glad me with thy beauty, but to cheer me with thy counsel, to support me with thy valor, that Heaven gave me thee as a helpmate."

"Now, our Lady bless thee for those words!" said Nina, kissing the hand that hung over her shoulder; "and if I started at the word 'danger,' it was but the woman's thought of thee, — an unworthy thought, my Cola, for glory and danger go together. And I am as ready to share the last as the first. If the hour of trial ever come, none of thy friends shall be so faithful to thy side as this weak form but undaunted heart."

"I know it, my own Nina; I know it," said Rienzi, rising, and pacing the chamber with large and rapid strides. "Now listen to me. Thou knowest that, to govern in safety, it is my policy as my pride to govern justly. To govern justly is an awful thing when mighty Barons are the culprits. Nina, for an open and audacious robbery our court has sentenced Martin of the Orsini, the Lord of Porto, to death. His corse swings now on the Staircase of the Lion."

"A dreadful doom!" said Nina, shuddering.

"True; but by his death thousands of poor and honest men may live in peace. It is not that which troubles me; the Barons resent the deed, as an insult to them that law should touch a noble. They will rise, they will rebel. I foresee the storm, not the spell to allay it."

Nina paused a moment. "They have taken," she then said, "a solemn oath on the Eucharist not to bear arms against thee."

"Perjury is a light addition to theft and murder," answered Rienzi, with his sarcastic smile.

"But the people are faithful."

"Yes, but in a civil war (which the saints forefend!) those combatants are the stanchest who have no home but their armor, no calling but the sword. The trader will not leave his trade at the toll of a bell every day; but the Barons' soldiery are ready at all hours."

"To be strong," said Nina, — who, summoned to the councils of her lord, showed an intellect not unworthy of the honor, — "to be strong in dangerous times, authority must *seem* strong. By showing no fear, you may prevent the cause of fear."

"My own thought!" returned Rienzi, quickly. "You know that half my power with these Barons is drawn from the homage rendered to me by foreign States. When from every city in Italy the ambassadors of crowned princes seek the alliance of the Tribune, they must veil their dissent at the rise of the Plebeian. On the other hand, ~~that~~ strong abroad I must seem strong at home: the vast designs ~~we~~ have planned, and, as by a miracle, begun to execute,

abroad to be intrusted to an unsteady and fluctuating power. That design," continued Rienzi, pausing, and placing his hand on a marble bust of the young Augustus, "is greater than his whose profound yet icy soul united Italy in subjection; for it would unite Italy in freedom. Yes! could we but form one great federative league of all the States of Italy, each governed by its own laws, but united for mutual and common protection against the Attilas of the North, with Rome for their Metropolis and their Mother, this age and this brain would have wrought an enterprise which men should quote till the sound of the last trump!"

"I know thy divine scheme," said Nina, catching his enthusiasm; "and what if there be danger in attaining it? Have we not mastered the greatest danger in the first step?"

"Right, Nina, right! Heaven," and the Tribune, who ever recognized, in his own fortunes, the agency of the Hand above, crossed himself reverently, "will preserve him to whom it hath vouchsafed such lofty visions of the future redemption of the Land of the true Church and the liberty and advancement of its children! This I trust: already many of the cities of Tuscany have entered into treaties for the formation of this league; nor from a single tyrant, save John di Vico, have I received aught but fair words and flattering promises. The time seems ripe for the grand stroke of all."

"And what is that?" demanded Nina, wonderingly.

"Defiance to all foreign interference. By what right does a synod of stranger princes give Rome a king in some Teuton Emperor? Rome's people alone should choose Rome's governor. And shall we cross the Alps to render the title of our master to the descendants of the Goth?"

Nina was silent; the custom of choosing the sovereign by a diet beyond the Rhine, reserving only the ceremony of his subsequent coronation for the mock assent of the Romans, however degrading to that people, and however hostile to all notions of substantial independence, was so unquestioned at that time that Rienzi's daring suggestion left her amazed and breathless, prepared as she was for any scheme, however extravagantly bold.

"How!" said she, after a long pause; "do I understand aright? Can you mean defiance to the Emperor?"

"Why, listen: at this moment there are two pretenders to the throne of Rome, — to the Imperial crown of Italy, — a Bohemian and a Bavarian. To their election our assent — Rome's assent — is not requisite, not asked. Can we be called free, can we boast ourselves republican, when a stranger and a barbarian is thus thrust upon our necks? No, we will be free in reality as in name. Besides," continued the Tribune, in a calmer tone, "this seems to me politic as well as daring. The people incessantly demand wonders from me: how can I more nobly dazzle, more virtuously win them, than by asserting their inalienable right to choose their own rulers? The daring will awe the Barons, and foreigners themselves; it will give a startling example to all Italy; it will be the first brand of a universal blaze. It shall be done, and with a pomp that befits the deed!"

"Cola," said Nina, hesitatingly, "your eagle spirit often ascends where mine flags to follow; yet be not over bold."

"Nay, did you not, a moment since, preach a different doctrine? To be strong, was I not to seem strong?"

"May fate preserve you!" said Nina, with a foreboding sigh.

"Fate!" cried Rienzi; "there is *no* fate! Between the thought and the success, God is the only agent; and," he added with a voice of deep solemnity, "I shall not be deserted. Visions by night, even while thine arms are around me; omens and impulses, stirring and divine, by day, even in the midst of the living crowd, — encourage my path and point my goal. Now, even now, a voice seems to whisper in my ear: 'Pause not, tremble not, waver not; for the eye of the All-Seeing is upon thee, and the hand of the All-Powerful shall protect!'"

As Rienzi thus spoke, his face grew pale, his hair seemed to bristle, his tall and proud form trembled visibly, and presently he sank down on a seat and covered his face with his hands.

An awe crept over Nina, though not unaccustomed to such strange and preternatural emotions, which appeared yet the

more singular in one who in common life was so calm, stately, and self-possessed. But with every increase of prosperity and power those emotions seemed to increase in their fervor, as if in such increase the devout and overwrought superstition of the Tribune recognized additional proof of a mysterious guardianship mightier than the valor and art of man.

She approached fearfully and threw her arms around him, but without speaking.

Ere yet the Tribune had well recovered himself, a slight tap at the door was heard, and the sound seemed at once to recall his self-possession.

"Enter," he said, lifting his face, to which the wonted color slowly returned.

An officer, half-opening the door, announced that the person he had sent for waited his leisure.

"I come! — Core of my heart," he whispered to Nina, "we will sup alone to-night, and will converse more on these matters;" so saying, with somewhat less than his usual loftiness of mien he left the room, and sought his cabinet, which lay at the other side of the reception-chamber. Here he found Cecco del Vecchio.

"How, my bold fellow!" said the Tribune, assuming with wonderful ease that air of friendly equality which he always adopted with those of the lower class, and which made a striking contrast with the majesty, no less natural, which marked his manner to the great. "How now, my Cecco! Thou bearest thyself bravely, I see, during these sickly heats; we laborers — for both of us labor, Cecco — are too busy to fall ill, as the idle do, in the summer, or the autumn, of Roman skies. I sent for thee, Cecco, because I would know how thy fellow-craftsmen are like to take the Orsini's execution."

"Oh, Tribune!" replied the artificer, who, now familiarized with Rienzi, had lost much of his earlier awe of him, and who regarded the Tribune's power as partly his own creation, "they are already out of their honest wits at your courage in punishing the great men as you would the small."

"So; I am repaid! But hark you, Cecco, it will bring perhaps hot work upon us. Every Baron will dread lest it be

his turn next, and dread will make them bold, like rats in despair. We may have to fight for the Good Estate."

"With all my heart, Tribune," answered Cecco, gruffly. "I, for one, am no craven."

"Then keep the same spirit in all your meetings with the artificers. I fight for the people. The people at a pinch must fight with me."

"They will," replied Cecco; "they will!"

"Cecco, this city is under the spiritual dominion of the Pontiff,—so be it; it is an honor, not a burden. But the *temporal* dominion, my friend, should be with Romans only. Is it not a disgrace to Republican Rome that while we now speak, certain barbarians, whom we never heard of, should be deciding, beyond the Alps, on the merits of two sovereigns whom we never saw? Is not this a thing to be resisted? An Italian city,—what hath it to do with a Bohemian Emperor?"

"Little eno', Saint Paul knows!" said Cecco.

"Should it not be a claim questioned?"

"I think so!" replied the smith.

"And if found an outrage on our ancient laws, should it not be a claim resisted?"

"Not a doubt of it."

"Well, go to! The archives assure me that never was Emperor lawfully crowned but by the free votes of the people. We never chose Bohemian or Bavarian."

"But, on the contrary, whenever these Northmen come hither to be crowned, we try to drive them away with stones and curses; for we are a people, Tribune, that love our liberties."

"Go back to your friends; see, address them,—say that your Tribune will demand of these pretenders to Rome the right to her throne. Let them not be mazed or startled, but support me when the occasion comes."

"I am glad of this," quoth the huge smith; "for our friends have grown a little unruly of late, and say—"

"What do they say?"

"That it is true you have expelled the banditti, and curb the Barons, and administer justice fairly—"

"Is not that miracle enough for the space of some two or three short months?"

"Why, they say it would have been more than enough in a noble; but you, being raised from the people, and having such gifts and so forth, might do yet more. It is now three weeks since they have had any new thing to talk about; but Orsini's execution to-day will cheer them a bit."

"Well, Cecco, well," said the Tribune, rising; "they shall have more anon to feed their mouths with. So you think they love me not quite so well as they did some three weeks back?"

"I say not so," answered Cecco. "But we Romans are an impatient people."

"Alas, yes!"

"However, they will no doubt stick close enough to you, provided, Tribune, you don't put any new tax upon them."

"Ha! But if, in order to be free, it be necessary to fight; if, to fight, it be necessary to have soldiers, — why then the soldiers must be paid. Won't the people contribute something to their own liberties, — to just laws and safe lives?"

"I don't know," returned the smith, scratching his head as if a little puzzled; "but I know that poor men won't be over-taxed. They say they are better off with you than with the Barons before, and therefore they love you. But men in business, Tribune, poor men with families, must look to their bellies. Only one man in ten goes to law, only one man in twenty is butchered by a Baron's brigand; but every man eats, and drinks, and feels a tax."

"This cannot be your reasoning, Cecco!" said Rienzi, gravely.

"Why, Tribune, I am an honest man, but I have a large family to rear."

"Enough, enough!" said the Tribune, quickly; and then he added abstractedly, as to himself, but aloud: "Methinks we have been too lavish; these shows and spectacles should cease."

"What!" cried Cecco, "what, Tribune! — would you deny the poor fellows a holiday? They work hard enough, and

their only pleasure is seeing your fine shows and processions; and then they go home and say: 'See, *our* man beats all the Barons! what state he keeps!'"

"Ah! they blame not my splendor, then!"

"Blame it? no! Without it they would be ashamed of you, and think the *Buono Stato* but a shabby concern."

"You speak bluntly, Cecco, but perhaps wisely. The saints keep you! Fail not to remember what I told you!"

"No, no. It is a shame to have an Emperor thrust upon us; so it is. Good evening, Tribune."

Left alone, the Tribune remained for some time plunged in gloomy and foreboding thoughts.

"I am in the midst of a magician's spell," said he; "if I desist, the fiends tear me to pieces. What I have begun, that must I conclude. But this rude man shows me too well with what tools I work. For *me*, failure is nothing. I have already climbed to a greatness which might render giddy many a born prince's brain. But with my fall, Rome, Italy, Peace, Justice, Civilization, — all fall back into the abyss of ages!"

He rose; and after once or twice pacing his apartment, in which from many a column gleamed upon him the marble effigies of the great of old, he opened the casement to inhale the air of the now declining day.

The Place of the Capitol was deserted, save by the tread of the single sentinel. But still, dark and fearful, hung from the tall gibbet the clay of the robber noble; and the colossal shape of the Egyptian lion rose hard by, sharp and dark in the breathless atmosphere.

"Dread statue!" thought Rienzi, "how many unwhispered and solemn rites hast thou witnessed by thy native Nile ere the Roman's hand transferred thee hither, — the antique witness of Roman crimes! Strange! but when I look upon thee I feel as if thou hadst some mystic influence over my own fortunes. Beside thee was I hailed the republican lord of Rome; beside thee are my palace, my tribunal, the place of my justice, my triumphs, and my pomp; to thee my eyes turn from my bed of state; and if fated to die in power and peace, thou mayst be the last object my eyes will mark! Or if myself a victim —"

He paused, shrank from the thought presented to him, turned to a recess of the chamber, drew aside a curtain that veiled a crucifix and a small table on which lay a Bible and the monastic emblems of the skull and cross-bones, — emblems, indeed, grave and irresistible, of the nothingness of power and the uncertainty of life. Before these sacred monitors, whether to humble or to elevate, knelt that proud and aspiring man; and when he rose, it was with a lighter step and more cheerful mien than he had worn that day.

CHAPTER III.

THE ACTOR UNMASKED.

“IN intoxication,” says the proverb, “men betray their real characters.” There is a no less honest and truth-revealing intoxication in prosperity than in wine. The varnish of power brings forth at once the defects and the beauties of the human portrait.

The unprecedented and almost miraculous rise of Rienzi from the rank of the Pontiff's official to the Lord of Rome would have been accompanied with a yet greater miracle if it had not somewhat dazzled and seduced the object it elevated. When, as in well-ordered states and tranquil times, men rise slowly, step by step, they accustom themselves to their growing fortunes. But the leap of an hour from a citizen to a prince, from the victim of oppression to the dispenser of justice, is a transition so sudden as to render dizzy the most sober brain. And, perhaps, in proportion to the imagination, the enthusiasm, the genius of the man, will the suddenness be dangerous, excite too extravagant a hope, and lead to too chimerical an ambition. The qualities that made him rise, hurry him to his fall; and victory at the Marengo of his fortunes urges him to destruction at its Moscow.

In his greatness Rienzi did not so much acquire new quali-

ties as develop in brighter light and deeper shadow those which he had always exhibited. On the one hand he was just, resolute, the friend of the oppressed, the terror of the oppressor. His wonderful intellect illumined everything it touched. By rooting out abuse, and by searching examination and wise arrangement, he had trebled the revenues of the city without a single new tax. Faithful to his idol of liberty, he had not been betrayed by the wish of the people into despotic authority, but had, as we have seen, formally revived, and established with new powers, the Parliamentary Council of the city. However extensive his own authority, he referred its exercise to the people; in their name he alone declared himself to govern, and he never executed any signal action without submitting to them its reasons or its justification. No less faithful to his desire to restore prosperity as well as freedom to Rome, he had seized the first dazzling epoch of his power to propose that great federative league with the Italian States which would, as he rightly said, have raised Rome to the indisputable head of European nations. Under his rule trade was secure, literature was welcome, art began to rise.

On the other hand, the prosperity which made more apparent his justice, his integrity, his patriotism, his virtues, and his genius, brought out no less glaringly his arrogant consciousness of superiority, his love of display, and the wild and daring insolence of his ambition. Though too just to avenge himself by retaliating on the patricians their own violence; though in his troubled and stormy tribuneship not one unmerited or illegal execution of baron or citizen could be alleged against him even by his enemies, — yet sharing, less excusably, the weakness of Nina, he could not deny his proud heart the pleasure of humiliating those who had ridiculed him as a buffoon, despised him as a plebeian, and who, even now slaves to his face, were cynics behind his back. "They stood before him while he sat," says his biographer, "all these Barons, bareheaded, their hands crossed on their breasts, their looks downcast: oh, how frightened they were!" — a picture more disgraceful to the servile cowardice of the nobles than the haughty sternness of the Tribune. It might be that he deemed

it policy to break the spirit of his foes, and to awe those whom it was a vain hope to conciliate.

For his pomp there was a greater excuse,—it was the custom of the time; it was the insignia and witness of power; and when the modern historian taunts him with not imitating the simplicity of an ancient Tribune, the sneer betrays an ignorance of the spirit of the age and the vain people whom the chief magistrate was to govern. No doubt his gorgeous festivals, his solemn processions, set off and ennobled—if parade can so be ennobled—by a refined and magnificent richness of imagination, associated always with popular emblems, and designed to convey the idea of rejoicing for Liberty Restored, and to assert the state and majesty of Rome Revived,—no doubt these spectacles, however otherwise judged in a more enlightened age and by closet sages, served greatly to augment the importance of the Tribune abroad, and to dazzle the pride of a fickle and ostentatious populace. And taste grew refined, luxury called labor into requisition, and foreigners from all states were attracted by the splendor of a court over which presided, under Republican names, two sovereigns,¹ young and brilliant, the one renowned for his genius, the other eminent for her beauty. It was, indeed, a dazzling and royal dream in the long night of Rome, spoiled of her Pontiff and his voluptuous train, that holiday reign of Cola di Rienzi! And often afterwards it was recalled with a sigh, not only by the poor for its justice, the merchant for its security, but the gallant for its splendor, and the poet for its ideal and intellectual grace!

As if to show that it was not to gratify the more vulgar ap-

¹ Rienzi, speaking in one of his letters of his great enterprise, refers it to the ardor of youth. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but he was certainly a young man at the time now referred to. His portrait in the Museo Barberino, from which his description has been already taken in the first book of this work, represents him as beardless, and, as far as one can judge, somewhere above thirty,—old enough, to be sure, to have a beard; and seven years afterwards he wore a long one, which greatly displeased his *naïve* biographer, who seems to consider it a sort of crime. The head is very remarkable for its stern beauty, and little, if at all, inferior to that of Napoleon; to which, as I before remarked, it has some resemblance in expression, if not in feature.

petite and desire, in the midst of all his pomp, when the board groaned with the delicacies of every clime, when the wine most freely circled, the Tribune himself preserved a temperate and even rigid abstinence.¹ While the apartments of state and the chamber of his bride were adorned with a profuse luxury and cost, to his own private rooms he transported precisely the same furniture which had been familiar to him in his obscurer life. The books, the busts, the reliefs, the arms which had inspired him heretofore with the visions of the past, were endeared by associations which he did not care to forego.

But that which constituted the most singular feature of his character, and which still wraps all around him in a certain mystery, was his religious enthusiasm. The daring but wild doctrines of Arnold of Brescia, who, two centuries anterior, had preached reform, but inculcated mysticism, still lingered in Rome, and had in earlier youth deeply colored the mind of Rienzi; and as I have before observed, his youthful propensity to dreamy thought, the melancholy death of his brother, his own various but successful fortunes, had all contributed to nurse the more zealous and solemn aspirations of this remarkable man. Like Arnold of Brescia, his faith bore a strong resemblance to the intense fanaticism of our own Puritans of the Civil War, as if similar political circumstances conduced to similar religious sentiments. He believed himself inspired by awful and mighty commune with beings of the better world; saints and angels ministered to his dreams; and without this, the more profound and hallowed enthusiasm, he might never have been sufficiently emboldened by mere human patriotism to his unprecedented enterprise: it was the secret of much of his greatness, many of his errors. Like all men who are thus self-deluded by a vain but not inglorious superstition, united with and colored by earthly ambition, it is impossible to say how far he was the visionary, and how far at times he dared to be the impostor. In the ceremonies of his pageants, in the ornaments of his person, were invariably introduced mystic and figurative emblems. In times of danger he publicly professed

¹ *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*. — The biographer praises the abstinence of the Tribune.

to have been cheered and directed by divine dreams; and on many occasions, the prophetic warnings he announced having been singularly verified by the event, his influence with the people was strengthened by a belief in the favor and intercourse of Heaven. Thus delusion of self might tempt and conduce to imposition on others, and he might not scruple to avail himself of the advantage of seeming what he believed himself to be. Yet no doubt this intoxicating credulity pushed him into extravagance unworthy of, and strangely contrasted by, his soberer intellect, and made him disproportion his vast ends to his unsteady means by the proud fallacy that where man failed, God would interpose. Cola di Rienzi was no faultless hero of romance. In him lay, in conflicting prodigality, the richest and most opposite elements of character, — strong sense, visionary superstition, an eloquence and energy that mastered all he approached, a blind enthusiasm that mastered himself; luxury and abstinence, sternness and susceptibility, pride to the great, humility to the low; the most devoted patriotism and the most avid desire of personal power. As few men undertake great and desperate designs without strong animal spirits, so it may be observed that with most who have risen to eminence over the herd there is an aptness, at times, to a wild mirth and an elasticity of humor which often astonish the more sober and regulated minds that are "the commoners of life;" and the theatrical grandeur of Napoleon, the severe dignity of Cromwell, are strangely contrasted by a frequent, nor always seasonable, buffoonery, which it is hard to reconcile with the ideal of their characters or the gloomy and portentous interest of their careers. And this, equally a trait in the temperament of Rienzi, distinguished his hours of relaxation, and contributed to that marvellous versatility with which his harder nature accommodated itself to all humors and all men. Often from his austere judgment-seat he passed to the social board an altered man; and even the sullen Barons, who reluctantly attended his feasts, forgot his public greatness in his familiar wit; albeit this reckless humor could not always refrain from seeking its subject in the mortification of his crestfallen foes, — a pleasure it would have been wiser and more generous to

forego. And perhaps it was, in part, the prompting of this sarcastic and unbridled humor that made him often love to astonish as well as to awe. But even this gayety, if so it may be called, taking an appearance of familiar frankness, served much to ingratiate him with the lower orders; and if a fault in the prince, was a virtue in the demagogue.

To these various characteristics, now fully developed, the reader must add a genius of designs so bold, of conceptions so gigantic and august, conjoined with that more minute and ordinary ability which masters details, that with a brave, noble, intelligent, devoted people to back his projects, the accession of the Tribune would have been the close of the thralldom of Italy and the abrupt limit of the dark age of Europe. With such a people his faults would have been insensibly checked, his more unwholesome power have received a sufficient curb. Experience, familiarizing him with power, would have gradually weaned him from extravagance in its display; and the active and masculine energy of his intellect would have found field for the more restless spirits, as his justice gave shelter to the more tranquil. Faults he had; but whether those faults, or the faults of the people, were to prepare his downfall, is yet to be seen.

Meanwhile, amidst a discontented nobility and a fickle populace, urged on by the danger of repose to the danger of enterprise; partly blinded by his outward power, partly impelled by the fear of internal weakness; at once made sanguine by his genius and his fanaticism, and uneasy by the expectations of the crowd,—he threw himself headlong into the gulf of the rushing Time, and surrendered his lofty spirit to no other guidance than a conviction of its natural buoyancy and its heaven-directed haven.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

WHILE Rienzi was preparing, in concert, perhaps, with the ambassadors of the brave Tuscan states, — whose pride of country and love of liberty were well fitted to comprehend, and even share them, — his schemes for the emancipation from all foreign yoke of the Ancient Queen and the Everlasting Garden of the World, the Barons, in restless secrecy, were revolving projects for the restoration of their own power.

One morning the heads of the Savelli, the Orsini, and the Frangipani met at the disfortified palace of Stephen Colonna. Their conference was warm and earnest; now resolute, now wavering, in its object, as indignation or fear prevailed.

"You have heard," said Luca di Savelli, in his usual soft and womanly voice, "that the Tribune has proclaimed that, the day after to-morrow, he will take the order of knighthood, and watch the night before in the Church of the Lateran! He has honored me with a request to attend his vigil."

"Yes, yes, the knave! What means this new fantasy?" said the brutal Prince of the Orsini.

"Unless it be to have the cavalier's right to challenge a noble," said old Colonna, "I cannot conjecture. Will Rome never grow weary of this madman?"

"Rome is the more mad of the two," said Luca di Savelli; "but methinks, in his wildness, the Tribune hath committed one error of which we may well avail ourselves at Avignon."

"Ah!" cried the old Colonna, "that must be our game: passive here, let us fight at Avignon."

"In a word, then, he hath ordered that his bath shall be prepared in the holy porphyry vase in which once bathed the Emperor Constantine."

"Profanation! profanation!" cried Stephen. "This is enough to excuse a bull of excommunication. The Pope shall hear of it. I will despatch a courier forthwith."

"Better wait and see the ceremony," said the Savelli; "some greater folly will close the pomp, be assured."

"Hark ye, my masters!" said the grim lord of the Orsini, "ye are for delay and caution; I for promptness and daring. My kinsman's blood calls aloud, and brooks no parley."

"And what do?" said the soft-voiced Savelli: "fight, without soldiers, against twenty thousand infuriated Romans? Not I."

Orsini sank his voice into a meaning whisper. "In Venice," said he, "this upstart might be mastered without an army. Think you in Rome no man wears a stiletto?"

"Hush!" said Stephen, who was of far nobler and better nature than his compeers, and who, justifying to himself all other resistance to the Tribune, felt his conscience rise against assassination; "this must not be, — your zeal transports you."

"Besides, whom can we employ? Scarce a German left in the city; and to whisper this to a Roman were to exchange places with poor Martino, Heaven take him! for he's nearer Heaven than ever he was before," said the Savelli.

"Jest me no jests!" cried the Orsini, fiercely. "Jests on such a subject! By Saint Francis, I would, since thou lovest such wit, thou hadst it all to thyself; and, methinks, at the Tribune's board I have seen thee laugh at his rude humor as if thou didst not require a cord to choke thee."

"Better to laugh than to tremble," returned the Savelli.

"How! darest thou say I tremble?" cried the Baron.

"Hush, hush!" said the veteran Colonna, with impatient dignity. "We are not now in such holiday times as to quarrel amongst ourselves. Forbear, my lords!"

"Your greater prudence, Signor," said the sarcastic Savelli, "arises from your greater safety. Your house is about to shelter itself under the Tribune's; and when the Lord Adrian returns from Naples, the innkeeper's son will be brother to your kinsman."

"You might spare me that taunt," said the old noble, with some emotion. "Heaven knows how bitterly I have chafed at the thought; yet I would Adrian were with us. His word goes far to moderate the Tribune and to guide my own course, for my passion beguiles my reason; and since his departure methinks we have been the more sullen without being the more strong. Let this pass. If my own son had wed the Tribune's sister, I would yet strike a blow for the old constitution, as becomes a noble, if I but saw that the blow would not cut off my own head."

Savelli, who had been whispering apart with Rinaldo Frangipani, now said, —

"Noble Prince, listen to me. You are bound by your kinsman's approaching connection, your venerable age, and your intimacy with the Pontiff, to a greater caution than we are. Leave to us the management of the enterprise, and be assured of our discretion."

A young boy, Stefanello, who afterwards succeeded to the representation of the direct line of the Colonna, and whom the reader will once again encounter ere our tale be closed, was playing by his grandsire's knees. He looked sharply up at Savelli, and said, "My grandfather is too wise, and you are too timid; Frangipani is too yielding, and Orsini is too like a vexed bull. I wish I were a year or two older."

"And what would you do, my pretty censurer?" said the smooth Savelli, biting his smiling lip.

"Stab the Tribune with my own stiletto, and then hey for Palestrina!"

"The egg will hatch a brave serpent," quoth the Savelli. "Yet why so bitter against the Tribune, my cockatrice?"

"Because he allowed an insolent mercer to arrest my uncle Agapet for debt. The debt had been owed these ten years; and though it is said that no house in Rome has owed more money than the Colonna, this is the first time I ever heard of a rascally creditor being allowed to claim his debt unless with doffed cap and bended knee. And I say that I would not live to be a Baron, if such upstart insolence is to be put upon me."

"My child," said old Stephen, laughing heartily, "I see our noble order will be safe enough in your hands."

"And," continued the child, emboldened by the applause he received, "if I had time, after pricking the Tribune, I would fain have a second stroke at —"

"Whom?" said the Savelli, observing the boy pause.

"My cousin Adrian. Shame on him for dreaming to make one a wife whose birth would scarce fit her for a Colonna's leman!"

"Go play, my child, go play," said the old Colonna, as he pushed the boy from him.

"Enough of this babble," cried the Orsini, rudely. "Tell me, old lord, just as I entered, I saw an old friend (one of your former mercenaries) quit the palace: may I crave his errand?"

"Ah, yes, — a messenger from Fra Moreale. I wrote to the Knight, reproving him for his desertion on our ill-starred return from Corneto, and intimating that five hundred lances would be highly paid for just now."

"Ah!" said Savelli; "and what is his answer?"

"Oh! wily and evasive. He is profuse in compliments and good wishes, but says he is under fealty to the Hungarian king, whose cause is before Rienzi's tribunal; that he cannot desert his present standard; that he fears Rome is so evenly balanced between patricians and the people that whatever party would permanently be uppermost must call in a Podesta; and this character alone the Provençal insinuates would suit him."

"Montreal our Podesta?" cried the Orsini.

"And why not?" said Savelli. "As good a well-born Podesta as a low-born Tribune! But I trust we may do without either. Colonna, has this messenger from Fra Moreale left the city?"

"I suppose so."

"No," said Orsini; "I met him at the gate, and knew him of old: it is Rodolf the Saxon, once a hireling of the Colonna, who has made some widows among my clients in the good old day. He is a little disguised now; however, I recognized and

accosted him, for I thought he was one who might yet become a friend, and I bade him await me at my palace."

"You did well," said the Savelli, musing, and his eyes met those of Orsini. Shortly afterwards a conference in which much was said and nothing settled was broken up; but Luca di Savelli, loitering at the porch, prayed the Frangipani and the other Barons to adjourn to the Orsini's palace.

"The old Colonna," said he, "is wellnigh in his dotage. We shall come to a quick determination without him, and we can secure his proxy in his son."

And this was a true prophecy; for half-an-hour's consultation with Rodolf of Saxony sufficed to ripen thought into enterprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT AND ITS INCIDENTS.

WITH the following twilight, Rome was summoned to the commencement of the most magnificent spectacle the Imperial City had witnessed since the fall of the Cæsars. It had been a singular privilege, arrogated by the people of Rome, to confer upon their citizens the order of knighthood. Twenty years before, a Colonna and an Orsini had received this popular honor. Rienzi, who designed it as the prelude to a more important ceremony, claimed from the Romans a similar distinction. From the Capitol in the Lateran swept, in long procession, all that Rome boasted of noble, of fair, and brave. First went horsemen without number, and from all the neighboring parts of Italy, in apparel that well befitted the occasion. Trumpeters and musicians of all kinds followed, and the trumpets were of silver; youths bearing the harness of the knightly war-steed, wrought with gold, preceded the march of the loftiest matronage of Rome, whose love for show, and it may be whose admiration for triumphant fame (which to women sanctions many offences), made them forget the hum-

bled greatness of their lords, — amidst them Nina and Irene, outshining all the rest; then came the Tribune and the Pontiff's Vicar, surrounded by all the great signors of the city, smothering alike resentment, revenge, and scorn, and struggling who should approach nearest to the monarch of the day. The high-hearted old Colonna alone remained aloof, following at a little distance, and in a garb studiously plain. But his age, his rank, his former renown in war and state, did not suffice to draw to his gray locks and high-born mien a single one of the shouts that attended the meanest lord on whom the great Tribune smiled. Savelli followed nearest to Rienzi, the most obsequious of the courtly band; immediately before the Tribune came two men: the one bore a drawn sword, the other the *pendone*, or standard usually assigned to royalty. The Tribune himself was clothed in a long robe of white satin, whose snowy dazzle (*miri candoris*) is peculiarly dwelt on by the historian, richly decorated with gold; while on his breast were many of those mystic symbols I have before alluded to, the exact meaning of which was perhaps known only to the wearer. In his dark eye, and on that large tranquil brow, in which thought seemed to sleep, as sleeps a storm, there might be detected a mind abstracted from the pomp around; but ever and anon he aroused himself, and conversed partially with Raimond or Savelli.

"This is a quaint game," said the Orsini, falling back to the old Colonna; "but it may end tragically."

"Methinks it may," said the old man, "if the Tribune overhear thee."

Orsini grew pale. "How? Nay, nay; even if he did, he never resents words, but professes to laugh at our spoken rage. It was but the other day that some knave told him what one of the Annibaldi said of him, — words for which a true cavalier would have drawn the speaker's life's blood; and he sent for the Annibaldi and said, 'My friend, receive this purse of gold, — court wit should be paid.'"

"Did Annibaldi take the gold?"

"Why, no. The Tribune was pleased with the spirit, and made him sup with him; and Annibaldi says he never spent

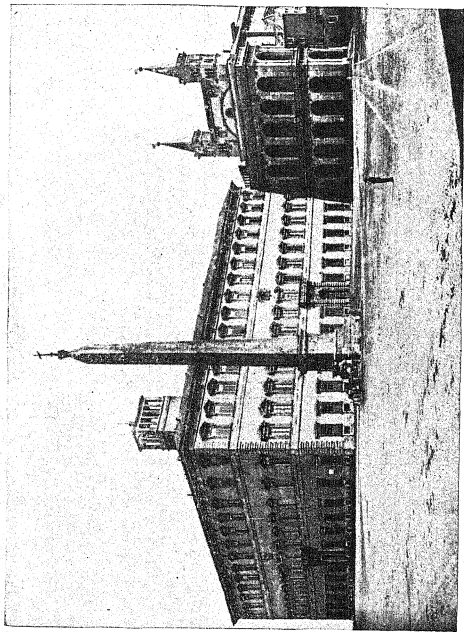
a merrier evening, and no longer wonders that his kinsman, Riccardo, loves the buffoon so."

Arrived now at the Lateran, Luca di Savelli fell also back, and whispered to Orsini; the Frangipani and some others of the nobles exchanged meaning looks; Rienzi, entering the sacred edifice, in which, according to custom, he was to pass the night watching his armor, bade the crowd farewell, and summoned them the next morning, "To hear things that might, he trusted, be acceptable to heaven and earth."

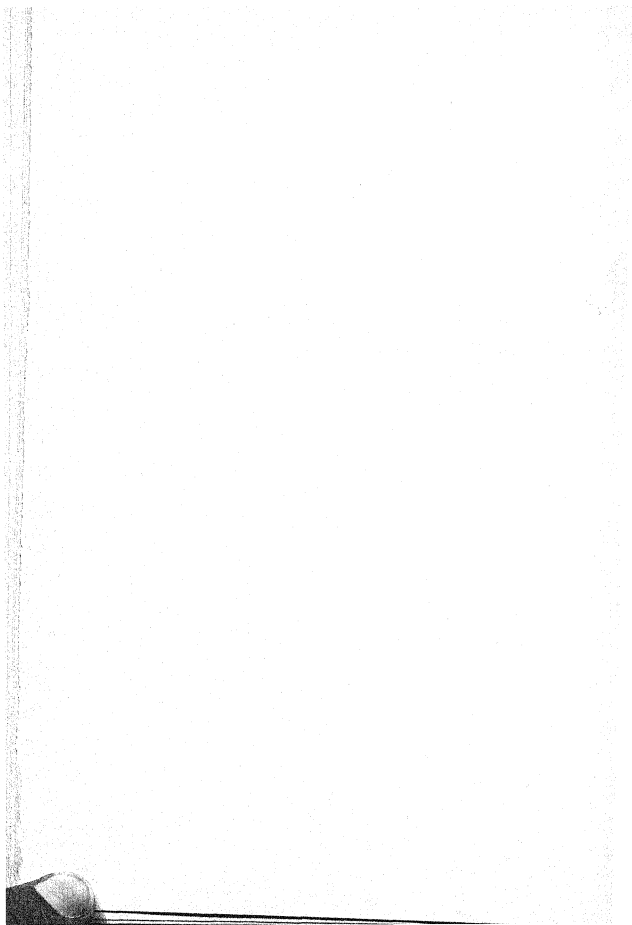
The immense multitude received this intimation with curiosity and gladness, while those who had been in some measure prepared by Cecco del Vecchio, hailed it as an omen of their Tribune's unflagging resolution. The concourse dispersed with singular order and quietness; it was recorded as a remarkable fact that in so great a crowd, composed of men of all parties, none exhibited license or indulged in quarrel. Some of the barons and cavaliers, among whom was Luca di Savelli, whose sleek urbanity and sarcastic humor found favor with the Tribune, and a few subordinate pages and attendants alone remained; and save a single sentinel at the porch, that broad space before the Palace, the Basilica and Fount of Constantine, soon presented a silent and desolate void to the melancholy moonlight. Within the church, according to the usage of the time and rite, the descendant of the Teuton kings received the order of the Santo Spirito. His pride or some superstition equally weak, though more excusable, led him to bathe in the porphyry vase which an absurd legend consecrated to Constantine; and this, as Savelli predicted, cost him dear. These appointed ceremonies concluded, his arms were placed in the part of the church within the columns of St. John. And here his state bed was prepared.¹

The attendant barons, pages, and chamberlains retired out of sight to a small side chapel in the edifice, and Rienzi was left alone. A single lamp, placed beside his bed, contended with the mournful rays of the moon, that cast through the

¹ In a more northern country, the eve of knighthood would have been spent without sleeping. In Italy, the ceremony of watching the armor does not appear to have been so rigidly observed.



PIAZZA OF ST. JOHN OF LATERAN AND THE LATERAN PALACE.



long casements, over aisle and pillar, its "dim religious light." The sanctity of the place, the solemnity of the hour, and the solitary silence round were well calculated to deepen the high-wrought and earnest mood of that son of fortune. Many and high fancies swept over his mind,—now of worldly aspirations, now of more august but visionary belief, till at length, wearied with his own reflections, he cast himself on the bed. It was an omen, which graver history has not neglected to record, that the moment he pressed the bed, new prepared for the occasion, part of it sank under him. He himself was affected by the accident, and sprang forth, turning pale and muttering; but as if ashamed of his weakness, after a moment's pause again composed himself to rest, and drew the drapery round him.

The moonbeams grew fainter and more faint as the time proceeded, and the sharp distinction between light and shade faded fast from the marble floor, when from behind a column at the farthest verge of the building a strange shadow suddenly crossed the sickly light; it crept on; it moved, but without an echo; from pillar to pillar it flitted; it rested at last behind the column nearest to the Tribune's bed; it remained stationary.

The shades gathered darker and darker round; the stillness seemed to deepen; the moon was gone; and save from the struggling ray of the lamp beside Rienzi, the blackness of night closed over the solemn and ghostly scene.

In one of the side chapels, as I have before said, which, in the many alterations the church has undergone is probably long since destroyed, were Savelli and the few attendants retained by the Tribune. Savelli alone slept not; he remained sitting erect, breathless, and listening, while the tall lights in the chapel rendered yet more impressive the rapid changes of his countenance.

"Now pray Heaven," said he, "the knave miscarry not! Such an occasion may never again occur! He has a strong arm and a dexterous hand, doubtless; but the other is a powerful man. The deed once done, I care not whether the doer escape or not; if not, why we must stab him! Dead men tell

no tales. At the worst, who can avenge Rienzi? There is no other Rienzi! Ourselves and the Frangipani seize the Aventine; the Colonna and the Orsini the other quarters of the city; and without the master-spirit, we may laugh at the mad populace. But if discovered —," and Savelli, who, fortunately for his foes, had not nerves equal to his will, covered his face and shuddered. "I think I hear a noise! No, — is it the wind? Tush, it must be old Vico de Scotto, turning in his shell of mail! Silent, — I like not that silence! No cry, no sound! Can the ruffian have played us false? or could he not scale the casement? It is but a child's effort, — or did the sentry spy him?"

Time passed on; the first ray of daylight slowly gleamed, when he thought he heard the door of the church close. Savelli's suspense became intolerable; he stole from the chapel, and came in sight of the Tribune's bed; all was silent.

"Perhaps the silence of death," said Savelli, as he crept back.

Meanwhile the Tribune, vainly endeavoring to close his eyes, was rendered yet more watchful by the uneasy position he was obliged to assume; for the part of the bed towards the pillow having given way, while the rest remained solid, he had inverted the legitimate order of lying, and drawn himself up, as he might best accommodate his limbs, towards the foot of the bed. The light of the lamp, though shaded by the draperies, was thus opposite to him. Impatient of his wakefulness, he at last thought it was this dull and flickering light which scared away the slumber, and was about to rise to remove it farther from him, when he saw the curtain at the other end of the bed gently lifted. He remained quiet and alarmed; ere he could draw a second breath, a dark figure interposed between the light and the bed, and he felt that a stroke was aimed against that part of the couch which, but for the accident that had seemed to him ominous, would have given his breast to the knife. Rienzi waited not a second and better-directed blow; as the assassin yet stooped, groping in the uncertain light, he threw on him all the weight and power of his large and muscular frame, wrenched the stiletto from the bravo's hand, and dashing him on the bed, placed his knee

on his breast. The stiletto rose, gleamed, descended; the murderer swerved aside, and it pierced only his right arm. The Tribune raised, for a deadlier blow, the revengeful blade.

The assassin thus foiled was a man used to all form and shape of danger, and he did not now lose his presence of mind.

"Hold!" said he; "if you kill me, you will die yourself. Spare me, and I will save *you*."

"Miscreant!"

"Hush! not so loud, or you will disturb your attendants, and some of them may do what I have failed to execute. Spare me, I say, and I will reveal that which were worth more than my life; but call not, speak not aloud, I warn you!"

The Tribune felt his heart stand still. In that lonely place, afar from his idolizing people, his devoted guards, with but loathing barons, or, it might be, faithless menials, within call, might not the baffled murderer give a wholesome warning? And those words and that doubt seemed suddenly to reverse their respective positions, and leave the conqueror still in the assassin's power.

"Thou thinkest to deceive me," said he, but in a voice whispered and uncertain, which showed the ruffian the advantage he had gained; "thou wouldst that I might release thee without summoning my attendants, that thou mightst a second time attempt my life."

"Thou hast disabled my right arm, and disarmed me of my only weapon."

"How camest thou hither?"

"By connivance."

"Whence this attempt?"

"The dictation of others."

"If I pardon thee —"

"Thou shalt know all."

"Rise," said the Tribune, releasing his prisoner, but with great caution, and still grasping his shoulder with one hand, while the other pointed the dagger at his throat. "Did my sentry admit thee? There is but one entrance to the church, methinks."

"He did not; follow me, and I will tell thee more."

"Dog! thou hast accomplices!"

"If I have, thou hast the knife at my throat."

"Wouldst thou escape?"

"I cannot, or I would."

Rienzi looked hard, by the dull light of the lamp, at the assassin. His rugged and coarse countenance, rude garb, and barbarian speech seemed to him proof sufficient that he was but the hireling of others, and it might be wise to brave one danger present and certain, to prevent much danger future and unforeseen. Rienzi too was armed, strong, active, in the prime of life; and at the worst there was no part of the building whence his voice would not reach those within the chapel, — if they could be depended upon.

"Show me then thy place and means of entrance," said he; "and if I but suspect thee as we move, thou diest. Take up the lamp."

The ruffian nodded, with his left hand took up the lamp as he was ordered, and with Rienzi's grasp on his shoulder, while the wound from his right arm dropped gore as he passed, he moved noiselessly along the church, gained the altar, to the left of which was a small room for the use or retirement of the priest. To this he made his way. Rienzi's heart misgave him a moment.

"Beware!" he whispered; "the least sign of fraud, and thou art the first victim!"

The assassin nodded again, and proceeded. They entered the room; and then the Tribune's strange guide pointed to an open casement. "Behold my entrance," said he; "and, if you permit me, my egress —"

"The frog gets not out of the well so easily as he came in, friend," returned Rienzi, smiling. "And now, if I am not to call my guards, what am I to do with thee?"

"Let me go, and I will seek thee to-morrow; and if thou payest me handsomely, and promisest not to harm limb or life, I will put thine enemies and my employers in thy power."

Rienzi could not refrain from a slight laugh at the proposition, but composing himself, replied: "And what if I call my attendants, and give thee to their charge?"

"Thou givest me to those very enemies and employers; and in despair lest I betray them, ere the day dawn they cut my throat—or thine."

"Methinks, knave, I have seen thee before."

"Thou hast. I blush not for name or country. I am Rodolf of Saxony!"

"I remember me,—servitor of Walter de Montreal. He, then, is thy instigator?"

"Roman, no! That noble Knight scorns other weapon than the open sword, and his own hand slays his own foes. Your pitiful, miserable, dastard Italians alone employ the courage and hire the arm of others."

Rienzi remained silent. He had released hold of his prisoner, and stood facing him; every now and then regarding his countenance, and again relapsing into thought. At length, casting his eyes round the small chamber thus singularly tenanted, he observed a kind of closet, in which the priests' robes, and some articles used in the sacred service, were contained. It suggested at once an escape from his dilemma; he pointed to it,—

"There, Rodolf of Saxony, shalt thou pass some part of this night,—a small penance for thy meditated crime; and to-morrow, as thou lookest for life, thou wilt reveal all."

"Hark ye, Tribune," returned the Saxon, doggedly, "my liberty is in your power, but neither my tongue nor my life. If I consent to be caged in that hole, you must swear on the crossed hilt of the dagger that you now hold that, on confession of all I know, you pardon and set me free. My employers are enough to glut your rage an' you were a tiger. If you do not swear this —"

"Ah! my modest friend, the alternative?"

"I brain myself against the stone wall! Better such a death than the rack!"

"Fool, I want not revenge against such as thou. Be honest, and I swear that, twelve hours after thy confession, thou shalt stand safe and unscathed without the walls of Rome. So help me our Lord and his saints!"

"I am content! *Donner und Hagel!* I have lived long

enough to care only for my own life, and the great captain's next to it; for the rest, I reckon not if ye Southerners cut each other's throats, and make all Italy one grave."

With this benevolent speech Rodolf entered the closet; but ere Rienzi could close the door, he stepped forth again.

"Hold!" said he: "this blood flows fast. Help me to bandage it, or I shall bleed to death ere my confession."

"*Per fede!*" said the Tribune, his strange humor enjoying the man's cool audacity; "but considering the service thou wouldst have rendered me, thou art the most pleasant, forbearing, unabashed good fellow I have seen this many a year. Give us thine own belt. I little thought my first eve of knighthood would have been so charitably spent!"

"Methinks these robes would make a better bandage," said Rodolf, pointing to the priests' gear suspended from the wall.

"Silence, knave," said the Tribune, frowning; "no sacrilege! Yet, as thou takest such dainty care of thyself, thou shalt have mine own scarf to accommodate thee."

With that the Tribune, placing his dagger on the ground, while he cautiously guarded it with his foot, bound up the wounded limb, — for which condescension Rodolf gave him short thanks, — resumed his weapon and lamp, closed the door, drew over it the long, heavy bolt without, and returned to his couch, deeply and indignantly musing over the treason he had so fortunately escaped.

At the first gray streak of dawn he went out of the great door of the church, called the sentry, who was one of his own guard, and bade him privately, and now ere the world was astir, convey the prisoner to one of the private dungeons of the Capitol. "Be silent," said he; "utter not a word of this to any one; be obedient, and thou shalt be promoted. This done, find out the councillor, Pandulfo di Guido, and bid him seek me here ere the crowd assemble."

He then, making the sentinel doff his heavy shoes of iron, led him across the church, resigned Rodolf to his care, saw them depart, and in a few minutes afterwards his voice was heard by the inmates of the neighboring chapel; and he was soon surrounded by his train.

He was already standing on the floor, wrapped in a large gown lined with furs, and his piercing eye scanned carefully the face of each man that approached. Two of the Barons of the Frangipani family exhibited some tokens of confusion and embarrassment, from which they speedily recovered at the frank salutation of the Tribune.

But all the art of Savelli could not prevent his features from betraying to the most indifferent eye the terror of his soul; and when he felt the penetrating gaze of Rienzi upon him, he trembled in every joint. Rienzi alone did not, however, seem to notice his disorder; and when Vico di Scotto, an old knight, from whose hands he received his sword, asked him how he had passed the night, he replied, cheerfully, —

“Well, well, my brave friend! Over a maiden knight some good angel always watches. Signor Luca di Savelli, I fear you have slept but ill; you seem pale. No matter; our banquet to-day will soon brighten the current of your gay blood!”

“Blood, Tribune!” said Di Scotto, who was innocent of the plot; “thou sayest blood, and lo! on the floor are large gouts of it not yet dry.”

“Now out on thee, old hero, for betraying my awkwardness! I pricked myself with my own dagger in unrobing. Thank Heaven it hath no poison in its blade!”

The Frangipani exchanged looks; Luca di Savelli clung to a column for support; and the rest of the attendants seemed grave and surprised.

“Think not of it, my masters,” said Rienzi; “it is a good omen and a true prophecy. It implies that he who girds on his sword for the good of the state must be ready to spill his blood for it: that am I. No more of this, — a mere scratch; it gave more blood than I recked of from so slight a puncture, and saves the leech the trouble of the lancet. How brightly breaks the day! We must prepare to meet our fellow-citizens; they will be here anon. Ha, my Pandulfo, welcome! Thou, my old friend, shalt buckle on this mantle!”

And while Pandulfo was engaged in the task, the Tribune whispered a few words in his ear, which, by the smile on his

countenance, seemed to the attendants one of the familiar jests with which Rienzi distinguished his intercourse with his more confidential intimates.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CELEBRATED CITATION.

THE bell of the great Lateran church sounded shrill and loud as the mighty multitude, greater even than that of the preceding night, swept on. The appointed officers made way with difficulty for the barons and ambassadors, and scarcely were those noble visitors admitted ere the crowd closed in their ranks, poured headlong into the church, and took the way to the chapel of Boniface VIII. There, filling every cranny and blocking up the entrance, the more fortunate of the press beheld the Tribune surrounded by the splendid court his genius had collected and his fortune had subdued. At length, as the solemn and holy music began to swell through the edifice, prelude to the celebration of the Mass, the Tribune stepped forth, and the hush of the music was increased by the universal and dead silence of the audience. His height, his air, his countenance, were such as always command the attention of crowds ; and at this time they received every adjunct from the interest of the occasion, and that peculiar look of intent yet suppressed fervor which is perhaps the sole gift of the eloquent that Nature alone can give.

"Be it known," said he, slowly and deliberately, "in virtue of that authority, power, and jurisdiction which the Roman people, in general parliament, have assigned to us, and which the Sovereign Pontiff hath confirmed, that we, not ungrateful of the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit, whose soldier we now are, nor of the favor of the Roman people, declare that Rome, capital of the world and base of the Christian Church, and that every City, State, and People of Italy are henceforth free. By

that freedom, and in the same consecrated authority, we proclaim that the election, jurisdiction, and monarchy of the Roman Empire appertain to Rome and Rome's people, and the whole of Italy. We cite, then, and summon personally the illustrious princes, Louis, Duke of Bavaria, and Charles, King of Bohemia, who would style themselves Emperors of Italy, to appear before us, or the other magistrates of Rome, to plead and to prove their claim between this day and the Day of Pentecost. We cite also, and within the same term, the Duke of Saxony, the Prince of Brandenburg, and whosoever else, potentate, prince, or prelate, asserts the right of Elector to the imperial throne, — a right that, we find it chronicled from ancient and immemorial time, appertaineth only to the Roman people; and this in vindication of our civil liberties, without derogation of the spiritual power of the Church, the Pontiff, and the Sacred College.¹ Herald, proclaim the citation, at the greater and more

¹ "Il tutto senza derogare all' autorità della Chiesa, del Papa e del Sacro Collegio." So concludes this extraordinary citation, this bold and wonderful assertion of the classic independence of Italy, in the most feudal time of the fourteenth century. The anonymous biographer of Rienzi declares that the Tribune cited also the Pope and the Cardinals to reside in Rome. De Sade powerfully and incontrovertibly refutes this addition to the daring or the extravagance of Rienzi. Gibbon, however, who has rendered the rest of the citation in terms more abrupt and discourteous than he was warranted by any authority, copies the biographer's blunder, and sneers at De Sade as using arguments "rather of decency than of weight." Without wearying the reader with all the arguments of the learned Abbé, it may be sufficient to give the first two.

1. All the other contemporaneous historians that have treated of this event, G. Villani, Hocsemius, the Vatican MSS. and other chroniclers, relating the citation of the Emperor and Electors, say nothing of that of the Pope and Cardinals; and the Pope (Clement VI.), in his subsequent accusations of Rienzi, while very bitter against his citation of the Emperor, is wholly silent on what would have been to the Pontiff the much greater offence of citing himself and the Cardinals.

2. The literal act of this citation, as published formally in the Lateran, is extant in Hocsemius (whence is borrowed, though not at all its length, the speech in the text of our present tale); and in this document the Pope and his Cardinals are *not* named in the summons.

Gibbon's whole account of Rienzi is superficial and unfair. To the cold and sneering scepticism, which so often deforms the gigantic work of that great writer, allowing nothing for that sincere and urgent enthusiasm which, whether

formal length, as written and intrusted to your hands, without the Lateran."

As Rienzi concluded this bold proclamation of the liberties of Italy, the Tuscan ambassadors and those of some other of the free States murmured low approbation. The ambassadors of those States that affected the party of the Emperor looked at each other in silent amaze and consternation. The Roman Barons remained with mute lips and downcast eyes; only over the aged face of Stephen Colonna settled a smile, half of scorn, half of exultation. But the great mass of the citizens were caught by words that opened so grand a prospect as the emancipation of all Italy: and their reverence of the Tribune's power and fortune was almost that due to a supernatural being; so that they did not pause to calculate the means which were to correspond with the boast.

While his eye roved over the crowd, the gorgeous assemblage near him, the devoted throng beyond; as on his ear boomed the murmur of thousands and ten thousands, in the space without, from before the Palace of Constantine (Palace now his own!), sworn to devote life and fortune to his cause; in the flush of prosperity that yet had known no check; in the zenith of power, as yet unconscious of reverse, — the heart of the Tribune swelled proudly; visions of mighty fame and limitless dominion, — fame and dominion once his beloved Rome's and by him to be restored, — rushed before his intoxicated gaze; and in the delirious and passionate aspirations of the moment he turned his sword alternately to the three quarters of the then known globe, and said, in an abstracted voice, as a man in a dream, "In the right of the Roman people *this* too is mine!"¹

Low though the voice, the wild boast was heard by all around as distinctly as if borne to them in thunder. And vain it were

of liberty or religion, is the most common parent of daring action, the great Roman seems but an ambitious and fantastic madman. In Gibbon's hands what would Cromwell have been? what Vane? what Hampden? The pedant Julian, with his dirty person and pompous affectation, was Gibbon's ideal of a great man.

¹ Questo e mio.

to describe the various sensations it excited : the extravagance would have moved the derision of his foes, the grief of his friends, but for the manner of the speaker, which, solemn and commanding, hushed for the moment even reason and hatred themselves in awe ; afterwards remembered and repeated, void of the spell they had borrowed from the utterer, the words met the cold condemnation of the well-judging ; but at that moment all things seemed possible to the hero of the people. He spoke as one inspired — they trembled and believed ; and as, rapt from the spectacle, he stood a moment silent, his arm still extended, his dark, dilating eye fixed upon space, his lip parted, his proud head towering and erect above the herd, — his own enthusiasm kindled that of the more humble and distant spectators ; and there was a deep murmur begun by one, echoed by the rest, “The Lord is with Italy and Rienzi !”

The Tribune turned ; he saw the Pope’s Vicar astonished, bewildered, rising to speak. His sense and foresight returned to him at once, and, resolved to drown the dangerous disavowal of the Papal authority for this hardihood, which was ready to burst from Raimond’s lips, he motioned quickly to the musicians, and the solemn and ringing chant of the sacred ceremony prevented the Bishop of Orvieto all occasion of self-exoneration or reply.

The moment the ceremony was over, Rienzi touched the Bishop, and whispered, “We will explain this to your liking. You feast with us at the Lateran. Your arm.” Nor did he leave the good Bishop’s arm, nor trust him to other companionship, until to the stormy sound of horn and trumpet, drum and cymbal, and amidst such a concourse as might have hailed, on the same spot, the legendary baptism of Constantine, the Tribune and his nobles entered the great gates of the Lateran, then the Palace of the World.

Thus ended that remarkable ceremony and that proud challenge of the Northern Powers in behalf of the Italian liberties, which, had it been afterwards successful, would have been deemed a sublime daring ; which, unsuccessful, has been construed by the vulgar into a frantic insolence ; but which, calmly considering all the circumstances that urged on the Tribune,

and all the power that surrounded him, was not, perhaps, altogether so imprudent as it seemed. And even accepting that imprudence in the extremest sense, by the more penetrating judge of the higher order of character it will probably be considered as the magnificent folly of a bold nature, excited at once by position and prosperity, by religious credulities, by patriotic aspirings, by scholastic visions too suddenly transferred from revery to action, beyond that wise and earthward policy which sharpens the weapon ere it casts the gauntlet.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FESTIVAL.

THE festival of that day was far the most sumptuous hitherto known. The hint of Cecco del Vecchio, which so well depicted the character of his fellow-citizens, as yet it exists, though not to such excess, in their love of holiday pomp and gorgeous show, was not lost upon Rienzi. One instance of the universal banqueting (intended, indeed, rather for the people than the higher ranks) may illustrate the more than royal profusion that prevailed. From morn till eve, streams of wine flowed like a fountain from the nostrils of the Horse of the great Equestrian Statue of Constantine. The mighty halls of the Lateran palace, open to all ranks, were prodigally spread; and the games, sports, and buffooneries of the time were in ample requisition. Apart, the Tribunessa, as Nina was rather unclassically entitled, entertained the dames of Rome; while the Tribune had so effectually silenced or conciliated Raimond that the good Bishop shared his peculiar table, — the only one admitted to that honor. As the eye ranged each saloon and hall, it beheld the space lined with all the nobility and knight-hood, the wealth and strength, the learning and the beauty, of the Italian metropolis, mingled with ambassadors and noble

strangers even from beyond the Alps,¹—envoys not only of the Free States that had welcomed the rise of the Tribune, but of the high-born and haughty tyrants who had first derided his arrogance, and now cringed to his power. There were not only the ambassadors of Florence, of Sienna, of Arezzo (which last subjected its government to the Tribune), of Todi, of Spoleto, and of countless other lesser towns and states, but also of the dark and terrible Visconti, prince of Milan, of Obizzo of Ferrara, and of the tyrant rulers of Verona and Bologna; even the proud and sagacious Malatesta, lord of Rimini, — whose arm afterwards broke for a while the power of Montreal at the head of his Great Company, — had deputed his representative in his most honored noble. John di Vico, the worst and most malignant despot of his day, — who had sternly defied the arms of the Tribune, — now subdued and humbled, was there in person; and the ambassadors of Hungary and of Naples mingled with those of Bavaria and Bohemia, whose sovereigns that day had been cited to the Roman Judgment Court. The nodding of plumes, the glitter of jewels and cloth of gold, the rustling of silks and jingle of golden spurs, the waving of banners from the roof, the sounds of minstrelsy from the galleries above, — all presented a picture of such power and state, a court and chivalry of such show, as the greatest of the feudal kings might have beheld with a sparkling eye and a swelling heart. But at that moment the cause and lord of all that splendor, recovered from his late exhilaration, sat moody and abstracted, remembering with a thoughtful brow the adventure of the past night, and sensible that amongst his gaudiest revellers lurked his intended murderers. Amidst the swell of the minstrelsy and the pomp of the crowd, he felt that treason scowled beside him; and the image of the skeleton obtruding, as of old, its grim thought of death upon the feast, darkened the ruby of the wine and chilled the glitter of the scene.

It was while the feast was loudest that Rienzi's page was seen gliding through the banquet and whispering several of

¹ The simple and credulous biographer of Rienzi declares his fame to have reached the ears of the Soldan of Babylon.

the nobles; each bowed low, but changed color as he received the message.

"My Lord Savelli," said Orsini, himself trembling, "bear yourself more bravely. This must be meant in honor, not revenge. I suppose your summons corresponds with mine."

"He — he — asks — asks — me to supper at the Capitol; a fri — endly meeting — (pest on his friendship!) — after the noise of the day."

"The words addressed also to me!" said Orsini, turning to one of the Frangipani.

Those who received the summons soon broke from the feast and collected in a group, eagerly conferring. Some were for flight, — but flight was confession; their number, rank, long and consecrated impunity reassured them, and they resolved to obey. The old Colonna, the sole innocent Baron of the invited guests, was also the only one who refused the invitation. "Tush!" said he, peevishly, "here is feasting enough for one day! Tell the Tribune that ere he sups I hope to be asleep. Gray hairs cannot encounter all this fever of festivity."

As Rienzi rose to depart, which he did early, for the banquet took place while yet morning, Raimond, eager to escape and confer with some of his spiritual friends as to the report he should make to the Pontiff, was beginning his expressions of farewell, when the merciless Tribune said to him gravely, —

"My lord, we want you on urgent business at the Capitol. A prisoner, a trial, perhaps," he added, with his portentous and prophetic frown, "an *execution*, waits us! Come."

"Verily, Tribune," stammered the good Bishop, "this is a strange time for execution!"

"Last night was a time yet more strange. Come."

There was something in the way in which the final word was pronounced that Raimond could not resist. He sighed, muttered, twitched his robes, and followed the Tribune. As he passed through the halls, the company rose on all sides. Rienzi repaid their salutations with smiles and whispers of frank courtesy and winning address. Young as he yet was,

and of a handsome and noble presence that took every advantage from splendid attire, and yet more from an appearance of intellectual command in his brow and eye which the less cultivated signors of that dark age necessarily wanted, he glittered through the court as one worthy to form, and fitted to preside over, it; and his supposed descent from the Teuton Emperor, which, since his greatness, was universally bruited and believed abroad, seemed undeniably visible to the foreign lords in the majesty of his mien and the easy blandness of his address.

"My Lord Prefect," said he to a dark and sullen personage in black velvet, the powerful and arrogant John di Vico, prefect of Rome, "we are rejoiced to find so noble a guest at Rome; we must repay the courtesy by surprising you in your own palace ere long. — Nor will you, Signor," as he turned to the envoy from Tivoli, "refuse us a shelter amidst your groves and waterfalls ere the vintage be gathered. Methinks Rome, united with sweet Tivoli, grows reconciled to the Muses.— Your suit is carried, Master Venoni: the council recognizes its justice; but I reserved the news for this holiday. You do not blame me, I trust?" This was whispered, with a half-affectationate frankness, to a worthy citizen, who, finding himself amidst so many of the great, would have shrunk from the notice of the Tribune; but it was the policy of Rienzi to pay an especial and marked attention to those engaged in commercial pursuits. As, after tarrying a moment or two with the merchant, he passed on, the tall person of the old Colonna caught his eye, —

"Signor," said he, with a profound inclination of his head. but with a slight emphasis of tone, "you will not fail us this evening."

"Tribune —" began the Colonna.

"We receive no excuse," interrupted the Tribune, hastily, and passed on.

He halted for a few moments before a small group of men plainly attired, who were watching him with intense interest; for they, too, were scholars, and in Rienzi's rise they saw another evidence of that wonderful and sudden power which

intellect had begun to assume over brute force. With these, as if abruptly mingled with congenial spirits, the Tribune relaxed all the gravity of his brow. Happier, perhaps, his living career, more unequivocal his posthumous renown, had his objects as his tastes been theirs!

"Ah, *carissime!*" said he to one, whose arm he drew within his own, "and how proceeds thy interpretation of the old marbles, — half unravelled? I rejoice to hear it! Confer with me as of old, I pray thee. To-morrow — no, nor the day after, but next week — we will have a tranquil evening. — Dear poet, your ode transported me to the days of Horace; yet, methinks, we do wrong to reject the vernacular for the Latin. You shake your head? Well, Petrarch thinks with you; his great epic moves with the stride of a giant, — so I hear from his friend and envoy, — and here he is! — My Lælius is that not your name with Petrarch? How shall I express my delight at his comforting, his inspiring letter? Alas! he overrates not my intentions, but my power. Of this hereafter."

A slight shade darkened the Tribune's brow at these words; but moving on, a long line of nobles and princes on either side, he regained his self-possession and the dignity he had dropped with his former equals. Thus he passed through the crowd, and gradually disappeared.

"He bears him bravely," said one, as the revellers resealed themselves. "Noticed you the *we*, — the style royal?"

"But it must be owned that he lords it well," said the ambassador of the Visconti; "less pride would be cringing to his haughty court."

"Why," said a professor of Bologna, "why is the Tribune called proud? I see no pride in him."

"Nor I," said a wealthy jeweller.

While these and yet more contradictory comments followed the exit of the Tribune, he passed into the saloon where Nina presided; and here his fair person and silver tongue (*Suavis coloratæque sententie*, according to the description of Petrarch) won him a more general favor with the matrons than he experienced with their lords, and not a little contrasted the formal

and nervous compliments of the good Bishop, who served him on such occasions with an excellent foil.

But as soon as the ceremonies were done, and Rienzi mounted his horse, his manner changed at once into a stern and ominous severity.

"Vicar," said he, abruptly, to the Bishop, "we might well need your presence. Learn that at the Capitol now sits the Council in judgment upon an assassin. Last night, but for Heaven's mercy, I should have fallen a victim to a hireling's dagger. Knew you aught of this?"

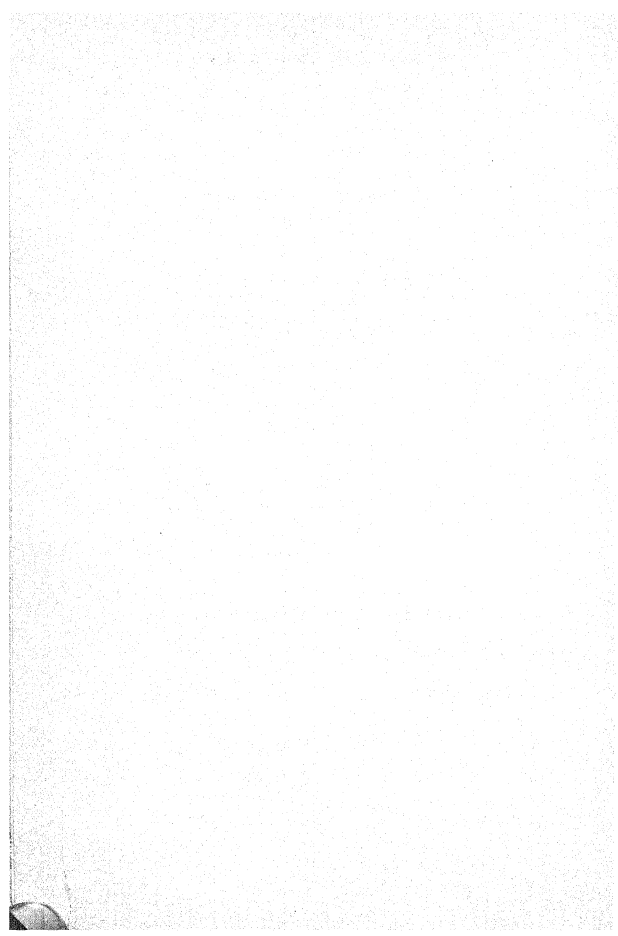
And he turned so sharply on the Bishop that the poor canonist nearly dropped from his horse in surprise and terror.

"I!" said he.

Rienzi smiled. "No, good my Lord Bishop! I see you are of no murderer's mould. But to continue: that I might not appear to act in mine own cause, I ordered the prisoner to be tried in my absence. In his trial — you marked the letter brought me at our banquet?"

"Ay, and you changed color."

"Well I might; in his trial, I say, he has confessed that some of the loftiest lords of Rome were his instigators. *They sup with me to-night!* Vicar, forward!"



RIENZI:

THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BOOK V.

THE CRISIS.

QUESTO ha acceso 'l fuoco e la fiamma laquale non la par spotegnere. —
Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. i. cap. 29.

He has kindled fire and flames which he will not be able to extinguish. —
Life of Cola di Rienzi.

CHAPTER I.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE TRIBUNE.

THE brief words of the Tribune to Stephen Colonna, though they sharpened the rage of the proud old noble, were such as he did not on reflection deem it prudent to disobey. Accordingly, at the appointed hour he found himself in one of the halls of the Capitol, with a gallant party of his peers. Rienzi received them with more than his usual graciousness.

They sat down to the splendid board in secret uneasiness and alarm, as they saw that, with the exception of Stephen Colonna, none, save the conspirators, had been invited to the banquet. Rienzi, regardless of their silence and abstraction, was more than usually gay; the old Colonna more than usually sullen.

“We fear we have but ill pleased you, my Lord Colonna, by our summons. Once, methinks, we might more easily provoke you to a smile.”

"Situations are changed, Tribune, since you were my guest."

"Why, scarcely so. I have risen, but you have not fallen. Ye walk the streets day and night in security and peace; your lives are safe from the robber, and your palaces no longer need bars and battlements to shield you from your fellow-citizens. I have risen, but *we all* have risen, — from barbarous disorder into civilized life! My Lord Gianni Colonna, whom we have made captain over Campagna, you will not refuse a cup to the Buono Stato, nor think we mistrust your valor when we say that we rejoice Rome hath no enemies to attest your generalship?"

"Methinks," quoth the old Colonna, bluntly, "we shall have enemies enough from Bohemia and Bavaria, ere the next harvest be green."

"And if so," replied the Tribune, calmly, "foreign foes are better than civil strife."

"Ay, if we have money in the treasury, which is but little likely if we have many more such holidays."

"You are ungracious, my lord," said the Tribune; "and besides, you are more uncomplimentary to Rome than to ourselves. What citizen would not part with gold to buy fame and liberty?"

"I know very few in Rome that would," answered the Baron. "But tell me, Tribune, you who are a notable casuist, which is the best for a state, — that its governor should be over-thrifty or over-lavish?"

"I refer the question to my friend Luca di Savelli," replied Rienzi. "He is a grand philosopher, and I wot well could explain a much knottier riddle, which we will presently submit to his acumen."

The Barons, who had been much embarrassed by the bold speech of the old Colonna, all turned their eyes to Savelli, who answered with more composure than was anticipated.

"The question admits a double reply. He who is *born* a ruler, and maintains a foreign army, governing by fear, should be penurious. He who is *made* ruler, who courts the people and would reign by love, must win their affection by generosity

and dazzle their fancies by pomp. Such, I believe, is the usual maxim in Italy, which is rife in all experience of state wisdom."

The Barons unanimously applauded the discreet reply of Savelli, excepting only the old Colonna.

"Yet pardon me, Tribune," said Stephen, "if I depart from the courtier-like decision of our friend, and opine, though with all due respect, that even a friar's coarse serge,¹ the parade of humility, would better become thee than this gaudy pomp, the parade of pride!" So saying, he touched the large loose sleeve, fringed with gold, of the Tribune's purple robe.

"Hush, father!" said Gianni, Colonna's son, coloring at the unprovoked rudeness and dangerous candor of the veteran.

"Nay, it matters not," said the Tribune, with affected indifference, though his lip quivered and his eye shot fire; and then, after a pause, he resumed with an awful smile: "If the Colonna love the serge of the friar, he may see enough of it ere we part. And now, my Lord Savelli, for my question, which I pray you listen to; it demands all your wit: Is it best for a State's Ruler to be over-forgiving, or over-just? Take breath to answer. You look faint—you grow pale—you tremble—you cover your face! Traitor and assassin, your conscience betrays you! My lords, relieve your accomplice, and take up the answer."

"Nay, if we are discovered," said the Orsini, rising in despair, "we will not fall unavenged. Die, tyrant!"

He rushed to the place where Rienzi stood,—for the Tribune also rose,—and made a thrust at his breast with his dagger; the steel pierced the purple robe, yet glanced harmlessly away, and the Tribune regarded the disappointed murderer with a scornful smile.

"Till yesternight I never dreamed that under the robe of state I should need the secret corselet," said he. "My lords, you have taught me a dark lesson, and I thank ye."

¹ "Vestimenta da Bizoco" was the phrase used by Colonna,—a phrase borrowed from certain heretics (*bizocchi*) who affected extreme austerity; afterwards the word passed into a proverb. See the comments of Zefrino Re, in *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*.

So saying, he clapped his hands, and suddenly the folding-doors at the end of the hall flew open, and discovered the saloon of the Council, hung with silk of a blood-red, relieved by rays of white,—the emblem of crime and death. At a long table sat the councillors in their robes; at the bar stood a ruffian form, which the banqueters too well recognized.

"Bid Rodolf of Saxony approach!" said the Tribune.

And led by two guards, the robber entered the hall.

"Wretch, *you* then betrayed us!" exclaimed one of the Frangipani.

"Rodolf of Saxony goes ever to the highest bidder," returned the miscreant with a horrid grin. "You gave me gold, and I would have slain your foe. Your foe defeated me: he gives me life; and life is a greater boon than gold!"

"Ye confess your crime, my lords! Silent! dumb! Where is your wit, Savelli? Where your pride, Rinaldo di Orsini? Gianni Colonna, is your chivalry come to this?"

"Oh!" continued Rienzi, with deep and passionate bitterness, "oh! my lords, will nothing conciliate you, — not to me, but to Rome? What hath been my sin against you and yours? Disbanded ruffians (such as your accuser), dismantled fortresses, impartial law, — what man, in all the wild revolutions of Italy, sprung from the people, ever yielded less to their license? Not a coin of your coffers touched by wanton power, not a hair of your heads harmed by private revenge. You, Gianni Colonna, loaded with honors, intrusted with command; you, Alphonso di Frangipani, endowed with new principalities: did the Tribune remember one insult he received from you as the Plebeian? You accuse my pride: was it my fault that ye cringed and fawned upon my power, — flattery on your lips, poison at your hearts? No, *I* have not offended you; let the world know that in me you aimed at liberty, justice, law, order, the restored grandeur, the renovated rights of Rome! At these, the Abstract and the Immortal, not at this frail form, ye struck; by the divinity of these ye are defeated; for the outraged majesty of these, criminals and victims, ye must die!"

With these words, uttered with the tone and air that would

have become the loftiest spirit of the ancient city, Rienzi, with a majestic step, swept from the chamber into the Hall of Council.¹

All that night the conspirators remained within that room, the doors locked and guarded; the banquet unremoved, and its splendor strangely contrasting with the mood of the guests.

The utter prostration and despair of these dastard criminals — so unlike the knightly nobles of France and England — has been painted by the historian in odious and withering colors. The old Colonna alone sustained his impetuous and imperious character. He strode to and fro the room like a lion in his cage, uttering loud threats of resentment and defiance, and beating at the door with his clenched hands, demanding egress and proclaiming the vengeance of the Pontiff.

The dawn came, slow and gray, upon that agonized assembly; and just as the last star faded from the melancholy horizon, and by the wan and comfortless heaven they regarded each other's faces, almost spectral with anxiety and fear, the great bell of the Capitol sounded the notes in which they well recognized the chime of death! It was then that the door opened, and a drear and gloomy procession of cordeliers, one to each Baron, entered the apartment! At that spectacle, we are told, the terror of the conspirators was so great that it froze up the very power of speech.² The greater part at length, deeming all hope over, resigned themselves to their ghostly confessors. But when the friar appointed to Stephen approached that passionate old man, he waved his hand impatiently, and said: "Tease me not! tease me not!"

"Nay, son, prepare for the awful hour."

"Son, indeed!" quoth the Baron. "I am old enough to be thy grandsire; and for the rest, tell him who sent thee that I neither am prepared for death, nor will prepare! I have

¹ The guilt of the Barons in their designed assassination of Rienzi, though hastily slurred over by Gibbon and other modern writers, is clearly attested by Muratori, the Bolognese Chronicle, etc. *They even confessed the crime.* (See *Cron. Estens: Muratori*, tom. xviii. p. 442.)

² *Diventarono sì gelati, che non poteano favellare.*

made up my mind to live these twenty years, and longer too, — if I catch not my death with the cold of this accursed night.”

Just at that moment a cry that almost seemed to rend the Capitol asunder was heard, as, with one voice, the multitude below yelled forth, —

“Death to the conspirators! — death! death!”

While this the scene in that hall, the Tribune issued from his chamber, in which he had been closeted with his wife and sister. The noble spirit of the one, the tears and grief of the other (who saw at one fell stroke perish the house of her betrothed), had not worked without effect upon a temper, stern and just indeed, but naturally averse from blood, and a heart capable of the loftiest species of revenge.

He entered the Council, still sitting, with a calm brow and even a cheerful eye.

“Pandulfo di Guido,” he said, turning to that citizen, “you are right; you spoke as a wise man and a patriot when you said that to cut off with one blow, however merited, the noblest heads of Rome, would endanger the State, sully our purple with an indelible stain, and unite the nobility of Italy against us.”

“Such, Tribune, was my argument, though the Council have decided otherwise.”

“Hearken to the shouts of the populace; you cannot appease their honest warmth,” said the demagogue Baroncelli.

Many of the Council murmured applause.

“Friends,” said the Tribune, with a solemn and earnest aspect, “let not Posterity say that Liberty loves blood; let us for once adopt the example and imitate the mercy of our great Redeemer! We have triumphed, — let us forbear; we are saved, — let us forgive!”

The speech of the Tribune was supported by Pandulfo and others of the more mild and moderate policy; and after a short but animated discussion, the influence of Rienzi prevailed, and the sentence of death was revoked, but by a small majority.

“And now,” said Rienzi, “let us be more than just, let us be generous. Speak, and boldly. Do any of ye think that I

have been over-hard, over-haughty with these stubborn spirits? I read your answer in your brows! I have! Do any of ye think this error of mine may have stirred them to their dark revenge? Do any of you deem that they partake, as we do, of human nature, that they are sensible to kindness, that they are softened by generosity, that they can be tamed and disarmed by such vengeance as is dictated to noble foes by Christian laws?"

"I think," said Pandulfo, after a pause, "that it will not be in human nature if the men you pardon, thus offending and thus convicted, again attempt your life!"

"Methinks," said Rienzi, "we must do even more than pardon. The first great Cæsar, when he did not crush a foe, strove to convert him to a friend —"

"And perished by the attempt," said Baroncelli, abruptly.

Rienzi started and changed color.

"If you would save these wretched prisoners, better not wait till the fury of the mob become ungovernable," whispered Pandulfo.

The Tribune roused himself from his reverie.

"Pandulfo," said he, in the same tone, "my heart misgives me. The brood of serpents are in my hand: I do not strangle them: they may sting me to death in return for my mercy: it is their instinct! No matter; it shall not be said that the Roman Tribune bought with so many lives his own safety, nor shall it be written upon my gravestone, 'Here lies the coward who did not dare forgive.' What, ho! there, officers, unclosethe the doors! My masters, let us acquaint your prisoners with their sentence."

With that, Rienzi seated himself on the chair of state at the head of the table, and the sun, now risen, cast its rays over the blood-red walls, in which the Barons, marshalled in order into the chamber, thought to read their fate.

"My Lords," said the Tribune, "ye have offended the laws of God and man; but God teaches man the quality of mercy. Learn, at last, that I bear a charmed life. Nor is he whom, for high purposes, Heaven hath raised from the cottage to the popular throne, without invisible aid and spiritual protection.

If hereditary monarchs are deemed sacred, how much more one in whose power the divine hand hath writ its witness! Yes, over him who lives but for his country, whose greatness is his country's gift, whose life is his country's liberty, watch the souls of the just and the unsleeping eyes of the sworded seraphim! Taught by your late failure and your present peril, bid your anger against me cease; respect the laws, revere the freedom of your city, and think that no state presents a nobler spectacle than men born as ye are, — a patrician and illustrious order, — using your power to protect your city, your wealth to nurture its arts, your chivalry to protect its laws! Take back your swords; and the first man who strikes against the liberties of Rome, let *him* be your victim, even though that victim be the Tribune. Your cause has been tried, your sentence is pronounced. Renew your oath to forbear all hostility, private or public, against the government and the magistrates of Rome, and ye are pardoned; ye are free!"

Amazed, bewildered, the Barons mechanically bent the knee; the friars who had received their confessions administered the appointed oath; and while, with white lips, they muttered the solemn words, they heard below the roar of the multitude for their blood.

This ceremony ended, the Tribune passed into the banquet-hall, which conducted to a balcony whence he was accustomed to address the people; and never, perhaps, was his wonderful mastery over the passions of an audience (*ad persuadendum efficax dictator, quoque dulcis ac lepidus*)¹ more gently needed or more eminently shown than on that day; for the fury of the people was at its height, and it was long ere he succeeded in turning it aside. Before he concluded, however, every wave of the wild sea lay hushed. The orator lived to stand on the same spot, to plead for a life nobler than those he now saved, and to plead unheard and in vain!

As soon as the Tribune saw the favorable moment had arrived, the Barons were admitted into the balcony; in the presence of the breathless thousands they solemnly pledged themselves to protect the Good Estate. And thus the morning

¹ Petrarch of Rienzi.

which seemed to dawn upon their execution witnessed their reconciliation with the people.

The crowd dispersed, the majority soothed and pleased, — the more sagacious, vexed and dissatisfied.

“He has but increased the smoke and the flame which he was not able to extinguish,” growled Cecco del Vecchio; and the smith’s appropriate saying passed into a proverb and a prophecy.

Meanwhile the Tribune, conscious at least that he had taken the more generous course, broke up the Council, and retired to the chamber where Nina and his sister waited him. These beautiful young women had conceived for each other the tenderest affection. And their differing characters, both of mind and feature, seemed by contrast to heighten the charms of both; as in a skilful jewelry the pearl and diamond borrow beauty from each other. And as Irene now turned her pale countenance and streaming eyes from the bosom to which she had clung for support, — the timid sister, anxious, doubtful, wistful; the proud wife, sanguine and assured, as if never diffident of the intentions nor of the power of her Rienzi, — the contrast would have furnished to a painter no unworthy incarnation of the Love that hopeth, and the Love that feareth, all things.

“Be cheered, my sweet sister,” said the Tribune, first caught by Irene’s imploring look; “not a hair on the heads of those who boast the name of him thou lovest so well is injured. Thank Heaven,” as his sister, with a low cry, rushed into his arms, “that it was against my life they conspired! Had it been another Roman’s, mercy might have been a crime! Dearest, may Adrian love thee half as well as I! And yet, my sister and my child, none can know thy soft soul like he who watched over it since its first blossom expanded to the sun. My poor brother! had he lived, your counsel had been his; and methinks his gentle spirit often whispers away the sternness which, otherwise, would harden over mine. Nina, my queen, my inspirer, my monitor, ever thus let thy heart, masculine in my distress, be woman’s in my power; and be to me, with Irene, upon earth what my brother is in heaven!”

The Tribune, exhausted by the trials of the night, retired for a few hours to rest; and as Nina, encircling him within her arms, watched over his noble countenance,—care hushed, ambition laid at rest,—its serenity had something almost of sublime. And tears of that delicious pride which woman sheds for the hero of her dreams stood heavy in the wife's eyes as she rejoiced more, in the deep stillness of her heart, at the prerogative, alone hers, of sharing his solitary hours, than in all the rank to which his destiny had raised her, and which her nature fitted her at once to adorn and to enjoy. In that calm and lonely hour she beguiled her heart by waking dreams vainer than the sleeper's, and pictured to herself the long career of glory, the august decline of peace, which were to await her lord.

And while she thus watched and thus dreamed, the cloud, as yet no bigger than a man's hand, darkened the horizon of a fate whose sunshine was wellnigh past!

CHAPTER II.

THE FLIGHT.

FRETTING his proud heart as a steed frets on the bit, old Colonna regained his palace. To him, innocent of the proposed crime of his kin and compeers, the whole scene of the night and morning presented but one feature of insult and degradation. Scarce was he in his palace ere he ordered couriers, in whom he knew he could confide, to be in preparation for his summons. "This to Avignon," said he to himself, as he concluded an epistle to the Pontiff. "We will see whether the friendship of the great house of the Colonna will outweigh the frantic support of the rabble's puppet. This to Palestrina,—the rock is inaccessible! This to John di Vico; he may be relied upon, traitor though he be! This to Naples; the Colonna will disown the Tribune's ambassador if he throw not up the trust and hasten hither, not a lover, but a soldier!

And may this find Walter de Montreal! Ah! a precious messenger he sent us; but I will forgive all—all—for a thousand lances.” And as with trembling hands he twined the silk round his letters, he bade his pages invite to his board, next day, all the signors who had been implicated with him on the previous night.

The Barons came, far more enraged at the disgrace of pardon than grateful for the boon of mercy. Their fears combined with their pride; and the shouts of the mob, the whine of the cordeliers, still ringing in their ears, they deemed united resistance the only course left to protect their lives and avenge their affront.

To them the public pardon of the Tribune seemed only a disguise to private revenge. All they believed was, that Rienzi did not dare to destroy them in the face of day; forgetfulness and forgiveness appeared to them as the means designed to lull their vigilance, while abasing their pride; and the knowledge of crime detected forbade them all hope of safety. The hand of their own assassin might be armed against them, or they might be ruined singly, one by one, as was the common tyrant-craft of that day. Singularly enough, Luca di Savelli was the most urgent for immediate rebellion. The fear of death made the coward brave.

Unable even to conceive the romantic generosity of the Tribune, the Barons were yet more alarmed when, the next day, Rienzi, summoning them one by one to a private audience, presented them with gifts and bade them forget the past; excused himself rather than them, and augmented their offices and honors.

In the Quixotism of a heart to which royalty was natural he thought that there was no medium course, and that the enmity he would not silence by death he could crush by confidence and favors. Such conduct from a born king to hereditary inferiors might have been successful; but the generosity of one who has abruptly risen over his lords is but the ostentation of insult. Rienzi in this, and perhaps in forgiveness itself, committed a fatal error of *policy*, which the dark sagacity of a Visconti, or, in later times, of a Borgia, would never have

perpetrated. But it was the error of a bright and a great mind.

Nina was seated in the grand saloon of the palace; it was the day of reception for the Roman ladies.

The attendance was so much less numerous than usual that it startled her, and she thought there was a coldness and restraint in the manner of the visitors present, which somewhat stung her vanity.

"I trust we have not offended the Signora Colonna," she said to the lady of Gianni, Stephen's son. "She was wont to grace our halls, and we miss much her stately presence."

"Madam, my lord's mother is unwell!"

"Is she so? We will send for her more welcome news. Methinks we are deserted to-day."

As she spoke, she carelessly dropped her handkerchief. The haughty dame of the Colonna bent not, not a hand stirred; and the Tribunessa looked for a moment surprised and disconcerted. Her eye roving over the throng, she perceived several, whom she knew as the wives of Rienzi's foes, whispering together with meaning glances, and more than one malicious sneer at her mortification was apparent. She recovered herself instantly, and said to the Signora Frangipani with a smile, "May we be a partaker of your mirth? You seem to have chanced on some gay thought which it were a sin not to share freely."

The lady she addressed colored slightly, and replied: "We were thinking, madam, that had the Tribune been present, his vow of knighthood would have been called into requisition."

"And how, Signora?"

"It would have been his pleasing duty, madam, to succor the distressed." And the Signora glanced significantly on the kerchief still on the floor.

"You designed me, then, this slight, Signoras," said Nina, rising with great majesty. "I know not whether your lords are equally bold to the Tribune; but this I know, that the Tribune's wife can in future forgive your absence. Four centuries ago a Frangipani might well have stooped to a Raselli; to-day, the dame of a Roman Baron might acknowledge a

superior in the wife of the first magistrate of Rome. I compel not your courtesy, nor seek it."

"We have gone too far," whispered one of the ladies to her neighbor. "Perhaps the enterprise may not succeed; and then —"

Further remark was cut short by the sudden entrance of the Tribune. He entered with great haste, and on his brow was that dark frown which none ever saw unquailing.

"How, fair matrons!" said he, looking round the room with a rapid glance, "ye have not deserted us yet? By the blessed cross, your lords pay a compliment to our honor to leave us such lovely hostages, or else, God's truth! they are ungrateful husbands. So, madam," turning sharp round to the wife of Gianni Colonna, "your husband is fled to Palestrina; yours, Signora Orsini, to Marino; yours with him, fair bride of Frangipani, — ye came hither to —. But *ye* are sacred even from a word!"

The Tribune paused a moment, evidently striving to suppress his emotion, as he observed the terror he had excited; his eye fell upon Nina, who, forgetting her previous vexation, regarded him with anxious amazement. "Yes," said he to her, "you alone, perhaps, of this fair assemblage know not that the nobles whom I lately released from the headsman's gripe are a second time forsworn. They have left home in the dead of night, and already the heralds proclaim them traitors and rebels. *Rienzi forgives no more!*"

"Tribune," exclaimed the Signora Frangipani, who had more bold blood in her veins than her whole house, "were I of thine own sex, I would cast the words 'traitor' and 'rebel,' given to my lord, in thine own teeth! Proud man, the Pontiff soon will fulfil that office!"

"Your lord is blest with a dove, fair one," said the Tribune, scornfully. "Ladies, fear not; while Rienzi lives, the wife even of his worst foe is safe and honored. The crowd will be here anon; our guards shall attend ye home in safety, or this palace may be your shelter, — for I warn ye that your lords have rushed into a great peril; and ere many days be passed, the streets of Rome may be as rivers of blood."

"We accept your offer, Tribune," said the Signora Frangipani, who was touched and, in spite of herself, awed by the Tribune's manner. And as she spoke, she dropped on one knee, picked up the kerchief, and presenting it respectfully to Nina, said, "Madam, forgive me. I alone of these present respect you more in danger than in pride."

"And I," returned Nina, as she leaned in graceful confidence on Rienzi's arm, "I reply that if there be danger, the more need of pride."

All that day and all that night rang the great bell of the Capitol. But on the following daybreak the assemblage was thin and scattered; there was a great fear stricken into the hearts of the people by the flight of the Barons, and they bitterly and loudly upbraided Rienzi for sparing them to this opportunity of mischief. That day the rumors continued; the murmurers for the most part remained within their houses, or assembled in listless and discontented troops. The next day dawned; the same lethargy prevailed. The Tribune summoned his Council, which was a Representative assembly.

"Shall we go forth as we are," said he, "with such few as will follow the Roman standard?"

"No," replied Pandulfo, who, by nature timid, was yet well acquainted with the disposition of the people, and therefore a sagacious counsellor. "Let us hold back; let us wait till the rebels commit themselves by some odious outrage, and then hatred will unite the waverers and resentment lead them."

This counsel prevailed; the event proved its wisdom. To give excuse and dignity to the delay, messengers were sent to Marino, whither the chief part of the Barons had fled, and which was strongly fortified, demanding their immediate return.

On the day on which the haughty refusal of the insurgents was brought to Rienzi, came fugitives from all parts of the Campagna. Houses burned, convents and vineyards pillaged, cattle and horses seized, —attested the warfare practised by the Barons, and animated the drooping Romans, by showing the mercies they might expect for themselves. That evening, of their own accord, the Romans rushed into the place of the

Capitol; Rinaldo Orsini had seized a fortress in the immediate neighborhood of Rome and had set fire to a tower, the flames of which were visible to the city. The tenant of the tower, a noble lady, old and widowed, was burned alive. Then rose the wild clamor, the mighty wrath, the headlong fury. The hour for action had arrived.¹

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE.

"I HAVE dreamed a dream," cried Rienzi, leaping from his bed. "The lion-hearted Boniface, foe and victim of the Colonna, hath appeared to me and promised victory.² Nina, prepare the laurel-wreath; this day victory shall be ours!"

"Oh, Rienzi! to-day?"

"Yes! hearken to the bell, hearken to the trumpet. Nay, I hear even now the impatient hoofs of my white war-steed! One kiss, Nina, ere I arm for victory! Stay, — comfort poor Irene; let me not see her: she weeps that my foes are akin to her betrothed. I cannot brook her tears; I watched her in her cradle. To-day I must have no weakness on my soul! Knaves, twice perjured! wolves, never to be tamed! — shall I meet ye at last sword to sword? Away, sweet Nina; to Irene, quick! Adrian is at Naples; and were he in Rome, her lover is sacred, though fifty times a Colonna."

With that, the Tribune passed into his wardrobe, where his pages and gentlemen attended with his armor. "I hear by our spies," said he, "that they will be at our gates ere noon, — four thousand foot, seven hundred horsemen. We will give them a hearty welcome, my masters. How, Angelo Villani, my pretty page, what do you out of your lady's service?"

¹ Ardea terre, arse la Castelluzza e case, e uomini. Non si schifo di ardere una nobile donna Vedova, veterana, in una torre. Per tale crudeltade li Romani furo più irati, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 20.

² In questa notte mi è apparito Santo Bonifacio Papa, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, cap. 32.

"I would fain see a warrior arm for Rome," said the boy, with a boy's energy.

"Bless thee, my child! there spoke one of Rome's true sons."

"And the Signora has promised me that I shall go with her guard to the gates, to hear the news —"

"And report the victory? Thou shalt. But they must not let thee come within shaft-shot. What! my Pandulfo, thou in mail?"

"Rome requires every man," said the citizen, whose weak nerves were strung by the contagion of the general enthusiasm.

"She doth; and once more I am proud to be a Roman. Now, gentles, the Dalmaticum:¹ I would that every foe should know Rienzi; and, by the Lord of Hosts, fighting at the head of the imperial people, I have a right to the imperial robe. Are the friars prepared? Our march to the gates shall be preceded by a solemn hymn: so fought our sires."

"Tribune, John di Vico is arrived with a hundred horse to support the Good Estate."

"He hath? The Lord has delivered us then of a foe, and given our dungeons a traitor! Bring hither yon casket, Angelo. So. Hark thee! Pandulfo, read this letter."

The citizen read, with surprise and consternation, the answer of the wily Prefect to the Colonna's epistle.

"He promises the Baron to desert to him in the battle, with the Prefect's banner," said Pandulfo. "What is to be done?"

"What! Take my signet, — here; see him lodged forthwith in the prison of the Capitol. Bid his train leave Rome; and if found acting with the Barons, warn them that their lord dies. Go, see to it without a moment's delay. Meanwhile, to the chapel; we will hear Mass."

Within an hour the Roman army, vast, miscellaneous, old men and boys mingled with the vigor of life, were on their march to the Gate of San Lorenzo. Of their number, which amounted to twenty thousand foot, not one-sixth could be deemed men-at-arms; but the cavalry were well equipped, and

¹ A robe or mantle of white borne by Rienzi, at one time belonging to the sacerdotal office, afterwards an emblem of empire.

consisted of the lesser Barons and the more opulent citizens. At the head of those rode the Tribune in complete armor, and wearing on his casque a wreath of oak and olive leaves wrought in silver. Before him waved the great gonfalon of Rome, while in front of this multitudinous array marched a procession of monks of the order of St. Francis, — for the ecclesiastical body of Rome went chiefly with the popular spirit and its enthusiastic leader, — slowly chanting the following hymn, which was made inexpressibly startling and imposing at the close of each stanza by the clash of arms, the blast of trumpets, and the deep roll of the drum, which formed, as it were, a martial chorus to the song: —

ROMAN WAR-SONG.

1.

March, march for your hearths and your altars !
 Curs'd to all time be the dastard that falters ;
 Never on earth may his sins be forgiven, —
 Death on his soul, shut the portals of heaven !
 A curse on his heart, and a curse on his brain !
 Who strikes not for Rome, shall to Rome be her Cain !
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !
*Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !*¹
 Blow, trumpets, blow !
 Blow, trumpets, blow !
 Gayly to glory we come,
 Like a king in his pomp,
 To the blast of the tromp,
 And the roar of the mighty drum !
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !

2.

March, march for your Freedom and Laws !
 Earth is your witness, — all Earth is your cause !
 Seraph and saint from their glory shall heed ye,
 The angel that smote the Assyrian shall lead ye !

¹ Rienzi's word of battle was *Spirito Santo, Cavaliere*; i. e., "Cavalier" in the singular number. The plural number has been employed in the text, as somewhat more animated, and therefore better adapted to the kind of poetry into the service of which the watchword has been pressed.

To the Christ of the Cross man is never so holy
As in braving the proud in defence of the lowly !

Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !

Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !

Blow, trumpets, blow !

Blow, trumpets, blow !

Gayly to glory we come,

Like a king in his pomp,

To the blast of the tromp,

And the roar of the mighty drum !

Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !

Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !

3.

March, march ! ye are sons of the Roman,

The sound of whose step was as fate to the foeman ;

Whose realm, save the air and the wave, had no wall

As he strode through the world like a lord in his hall !

Though your fame hath sunk down to the night of the grave,

It shall rise from the field like the sun from the wave.

Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !

Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !

Blow, trumpets, blow !

Blow, trumpets, blow !

Gayly to glory we come,

Like a king in his pomp,

To the blast of the tromp,

And the roar of the mighty drum !

Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears !

Spirito Santo, Cavaliers !

In this order they reached the wide waste that ruin and devastation left within the gates, and marshalled in long lines on either side, extending far down the vistaed streets, and leaving a broad space in the centre, awaited the order of their leader.

"Throw open the gates and admit the foe !" cried Rienzi with a loud voice, as the trumpets of the Barons announced their approach.

Meantime the insurgent Patricians, who had marched that morning from a place called the Monument, four miles distant, came gallantly and boldly on.

With old Stephen, whose great height, gaunt frame, and

lordly air showed well in his gorgeous mail, rode his sons, — the Frangipani and the Savelli, and Giordano Orsini, brother to Rinaldo.

"To-day the tyrant shall perish!" said the proud Baron, "and the flag of the Colonna shall wave from the Capitol."

"The flag of the Bear," said Giordano Orsini, angrily. "The victory will not be *yours* alone, my lord!"

"Our house ever took precedence in Rome," replied the Colonna, haughtily.

"Never while one stone of the palaces of the Orsini stands upon another."

"Hush!" said Luca di Savelli; "are ye dividing the skin while the lion lives? We shall have fierce work to-day."

"Not so," said the old Colonna; "John di Vico will turn, with his Romans, at the first onset, and some of the malcontents within have promised to open the gates. — How, knave?" as a scout rode up breathless to the Baron. "What tidings?"

"The gates are opened; not a spear gleams from the walls!"

"Did I not tell ye, lords?" said the Colonna, turning round triumphantly. "Methinks we shall win Rome without a single blow. Grandson, where now are thy silly forebodings?" This was said to Pietro, one of his grandsons, — the first born of Gianni, — a comely youth, not two weeks wedded, who made no reply. "My little Pietro here," continued the Baron, speaking to his comrades, "is so new a bridegroom that last night he dreamed of his bride, and deems it, poor lad, a portent."

"She was in deep mourning, and glided from my arms uttering 'Woe, woe, to the Colonna!'" said the young man, solemnly.

"I have lived nearly ninety years," replied the old man, "and I may have dreamed, therefore, some forty thousand dreams, — of which two came true, and the rest were false. Judge, then, what chances are in favor of the science!"

Thus conversing, they approached within bow-shot of the gates, which were still open. All was silent as death. The army, which was composed chiefly of foreign mercenaries, halted in deliberation, when lo! a torch was suddenly cast on

high over the walls; it gleamed a moment, and then hissed in the miry pool below.

"It is the signal of our friends within, as agreed on," cried old Colonna. "Pietro, advance with your company!" The young nobleman closed his visor, put himself at the head of the band under his command, and with his lance in his rest, rode in a half gallop to the gates. The morning had been clouded and overcast, and the sun, appearing only at intervals, now broke out in a bright stream of light, and glittered on the waving plume and shining mail of the young horseman disappearing under the gloomy arch, several paces in advance of his troop. On swept his followers, forward went the cavalry, headed by Gianni Colonna, Pietro's father. There was a minute's silence, broken only by the clatter of the arms and tramp of hoofs, when from within the walls rose the abrupt cry: "Rome, the Tribune, and the People! *Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" The main body halted aghast. Suddenly Gianni Colonna was seen flying backward from the gate at full speed.

"My son, my son!" he cried; "they have murdered him!" He halted abrupt and irresolute; then adding, "But I will avenge!" wheeled round, and spurred again through the arch, when a huge machine of iron, shaped as a portcullis, suddenly descended upon the unhappy father and crushed man and horse to the ground, — one blent, mangled, bloody mass.

The old Colonna saw, and scarce believed his eyes; and ere his troop recovered its stupor, the machine rose, and over the corpse dashed the Popular Armament. Thousands upon thousands, they came on, a wild, clamorous, roaring stream. They poured on all sides upon their enemies, who, drawn up in steady discipline, and clad in complete mail, received and broke their charge.

"Revenge and the Colonna!" "The Bear and the Orsini!" "Charity and the Frangipani!"¹ "Strike for the Snake"²

¹ Who had taken their motto from some fabled ancestor who had broken bread with a beggar in a time of famine.

² The Lion was, however, the animal usually arrogated by the heraldic vanity of the Savelli.

and the Savelli!" were then heard on high, mingled with the German and hoarse shout, "Full purses and the Three Kings of Cologne!" The Romans, rather ferocious than disciplined, fell butchered in crowds round the ranks of the mercenaries; but as one fell, another succeeded, and still burst with undiminished fervor the counter-cry of "Rome, the Tribune, and the People! *Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Exposed to every shaft and every sword by his emblematic diadem and his imperial robe, the fierce Rienzi led on each assault, wielding an enormous battle-axe, for the use of which the Italians were celebrated, and which he regarded as a national weapon. Inspired by every darker and sterner instinct of his nature, his blood heated, his passions aroused, fighting as a citizen for liberty, as a monarch for his crown, his daring seemed to the astonished foe as that of one frantic, his preservation that of one inspired: now here, now there; wherever flagged his own, or failed the opposing, force, glittered his white robe and rose his bloody battle-axe. But his fury seemed rather directed against the chiefs than the herd; and still where his charger wheeled was heard his voice, "Where is a Colonna?" "Defiance to the Orsini!" "*Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Three times was the sally led from the gate, three times were the Romans beaten back; and on the third, the gonfalon, borne before the Tribune, was cloven to the ground. Then, for the first time, he seemed amazed and alarmed, and raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "O Lord, hast Thou then forsaken me?" With that, taking heart, once more he waved his arm, and again led forward his wild array.

At eve the battle ceased. Of the Barons who had been the main object of the Tribune's assault, the pride and boast was broken. Of the princely line of the Colonna, three lay dead. Giordano Orsini was mortally wounded; the fierce Rinaldo had not shared the conflict. Of the Frangipani, the haughtiest signors were no more; and Luca, the dastard head of the Savelli, had long since saved himself by flight. On the other hand, the slaughter of the citizens had been prodigious; the ground was swamped with blood; and over heaps of slain (steeds and riders) the twilight star beheld Rienzi and the

Romans returning, victors, from the pursuit. Shouts of rejoicing followed the Tribune's panting steed through the arch; and just as he entered the space within, crowds of those whose infirmities, sex, or years had not allowed them to share the conflict, — women and children and drivelling age, — mingled with the bare feet and dark robes of monks and friars, being apprised of the victory, were prepared to hail his triumph.

Rienzi reined his steed by the corpse of the boy Colonna, which lay half immersed in a pool of water, and close by it, removed from the arch where he had fallen, lay that of Gianni Colonna, — that Gianni Colonna whose spear had dismissed his brother's gentle spirit. He glanced over the slain, as the melancholy Hesperus played upon the bloody pool and the gory corselet, with a breast heaved with many emotions; and turning, he saw the young Angelo, who, with some of Nina's guard, had repaired to the spot, and had now approached the Tribune.

"Child," said Rienzi, pointing to the dead, "*blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge!* To him who hath, sooner or later comes the hour; and an awful hour it is!"

The words sank deep into Angelo's heart, and in after life became words of fate to the speaker and the listener.

Ere Rienzi had well recovered himself, and as were heard around him the shrieks of the widows and mothers of the slain, the groans of the dying, the exhortations of the friars, mingled with sounds of joy and triumph, — a cry was raised by the women and stragglers on the battle-field without, of "The foe! the foe!"

"To your swords!" cried the Tribune; "fall back in order! Yet they cannot be so bold!"

The tramp of horses, the blast of a trumpet, were heard; and presently, at full speed, some thirty horsemen dashed through the gate.

"Your bows!" exclaimed the Tribune, advancing. "Yet hold, the leader is unarmed; it is our own banner. By our Lady, it is our ambassador of Naples, the Lord Adrian di Castello!"

Panting, breathless, covered with dust, Adrian halted at the

pool, red with the blood of his kindred, and their pale faces, set in death, glared upon him.

"Too late; alas! alas! Dread fate! unhappy Rome!"

"They fell into the pit they themselves had digged," said the Tribune, in a firm but hollow voice. "Noble Adrian, would thy counsels had prevented this!"

"Away, proud man, away!" said Adrian, impatiently waving his hand. "Thou shouldst protect the lives of Romans, and—O Gianni! Pietro! could not birth, renown, and thy green years, poor boy,—could not these save ye?"

"Pardon him, my friends," said the Tribune to the crowd; "his grief is natural, and he knows not all their guilt. Back, I pray ye; leave him to our ministering!"

It might have fared ill for Adrian, but for the Tribune's brief speech. And as the young lord, dismounting, now bent over his kinsmen, the Tribune also, surrendering his charger to his squires, approached, and despite Adrian's reluctance and aversion, drew him aside. "Young friend," said he, mournfully, "my heart bleeds for you. Yet bethink ye,—the wrath of the crowd is fresh upon them; be prudent."

"Prudent!"

"Hush! by my honor, these men were not worthy of your name. Twice perjured, once assassins, twice rebels; listen to me!"

"Tribune, I ask no other construing of what I see: they might have died justly, or been butchered foully; but there is no peace between the executioner of my race and me."

"Will *you*, too, be forsworn? Thine oath! Come, come; I hear not these words! Be composed, retire; and if, three days hence, you impute any other blame to me than that of unwise lenity, I absolve you from your oath, and you are free to be my foe. The crowd gape and gaze upon us: a minute more, and I may not avail to save you."

The feelings of the young patrician were such as utterly baffle description. He had never been much amongst his house, nor ever received more than common courtesy at their hands. But lineage is lineage still! And there, in the fatal hazard of war, lay the tree and sapling, the prime and hope of

his race. He felt there was no answer to the Tribune: the very place of their death proved they had fallen in an assault upon their countrymen. He sympathized not with their cause, but their fate. And rage, revenge alike forbidden, his heart was the more softened to the shock and paralysis of grief. He did not, therefore, speak, but continued to gaze upon the dead, while large and unheeded tears flowed down his cheeks; and his attitude of dejection and sorrow was so moving that the crowd, at first indignant, now felt for his affliction. At length his mind seemed made up. He turned to Rienzi, and said, falteringly: "Tribune, I blame you not, nor accuse. If you have been rash in this, God will have blood for blood. I wage no war with you, — you say right, my oath prevents me; and if you govern well, I can still remember that I am Roman. But — but — look to that bleeding clay; we meet no more! Your sister — God be with her! — between her and me flows a dark gulf!" The young noble paused some moments, choked by his emotions, and then continued: "These papers discharge me of my mission. Standard-bearers, lay down the banner of the Republic. Tribune, speak not; I would be calm — calm! And so farewell to Rome!" With a hurried glance towards the dead, he sprang upon his steed, and, followed by his train, vanished through the arch.

The Tribune had not attempted to detain him, had not interrupted him. He felt that the young noble had thought, acted as became him best. He followed him with his eyes.

"And thus," said he, gloomily, "Fate plucks from me my noblest friend and my justest counsellor: a better man Rome never lost!"

Such is the eternal doom of disordered states. The mediator between rank and rank, — the kindly noble, the dispassionate patriot, the first to act, the most hailed in action, — darkly vanishes from the scene. Fiercer and more unscrupulous spirits alone stalk the field; and no neutral and harmonizing link remains between hate and hate, until exhaustion, sick with horrors, succeeds to frenzy, and despotism is welcomed as repose!

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLLOWNESS OF THE BASE.

THE rapid and busy march of state events has led us long away from the sister of the Tribune and the betrothed of Adrian. And the sweet thoughts and gentle day-dreams of that fair and enamoured girl, however full to *her* of an interest beyond all the storms and perils of ambition, are not so readily adapted to narration: their soft monotony a few words can paint. They knew but one image, they tended to but one prospect. Shrinking from the glare of her brother's court, and eclipsed, when she forced herself to appear, by the more matured and dazzling beauty and all-commanding presence of Nina, to her the pomp and crowd seemed an unreal pageant, from which she retired to the *truth of life*, — the hopes and musings of her own heart. Poor girl! with all the soft and tender nature of her dead brother, and none of the stern genius and the prodigal ambition, — the eye-fatiguing ostentation and fervor of the living, — she was but ill fitted for the unquiet but splendid region to which she was thus suddenly transferred.

With all her affection for Rienzi, she could not conquer a certain fear which, conjoined with the difference of sex and age, forbade her to be communicative with him upon the subject most upon her heart.

As the absence of Adrian at the Neapolitan Court passed the anticipated date (for at no court then, with a throne fiercely disputed, did the Tribune require a nobler or more intelligent representative, — and intrigues and counter-intrigues delayed his departure from week to week), she grew uneasy and alarmed. Like many, themselves unseen, inactive, the spectators of the scene, she saw involuntarily farther into the time than the deeper intellect either of the Tribune or Nina; and the dangerous discontent of the nobles was visible and

audible to her in looks and whispers which reached not acuter or more suspected ears and eyes. Anxiously, restlessly, did she long for the return of Adrian, not from selfish motives alone, but from well-founded apprehensions for her brother. With Adrian di Castello, alike a noble and a patriot, each party had found a mediator; and his presence grew daily more needed, till at length the conspiracy of the Barons had broken out. From that hour she scarcely dared to hope; her calm sense, unblinded by the high-wrought genius which, as too often happens, made the Tribune see harsh realities through a false and brilliant light, perceived that the Rubicon was passed; and through all the events that followed she could behold but two images, — danger to her brother, separation from her betrothed.

With Nina alone could her full heart confer; for Nina, with all the differences of character, was a woman who loved. And this united them. In the earlier power of Rienzi, many of their happiest hours had been passed together, remote from the gaudy crowd, alone and unrestrained, in the summer nights, on the moonlit balconies, in that interchange of thought, sympathy, and consolation which to two impassioned and guileless women makes the most interesting occupation and the most effectual solace. But of late this intercourse had been much marred. From the morning in which the Barons had received their pardon, to that on which they had marched on Rome, had been one succession of fierce excitements. Every face Irene saw was clouded and overcast; all gayety was suspended; bustling and anxious councillors or armed soldiers had for days been the only visitors of the palace. Rienzi had been seen but for short moments, his brow wrapped in care. Nina had been more fond, more caressing than ever, but in those caresses there seemed a mournful and ominous compassion. The attempts at comfort and hope were succeeded by a sickly smile and broken words, and Irene was prepared, by the presentiments of her own heart, for the stroke that fell. Victory was to her brother, his foe was crushed, Rome was free; but the lofty house of the Colonnas had lost its stateliest props, and Adrian was gone forever!

She did not blame him; she could not blame her brother: each had acted as became his several station. She was the poor sacrifice of events and fate, — the Iphigenia to the Winds which were to bear the bark of Rome to the haven, or, it might be, to whelm it in the abyss. She was stunned by the blow; she did not even weep or complain; she bowed to the storm that swept over her, and it passed. For two days she neither took food nor rest; she shut herself up; she asked only the boon of solitude: but on the third morning she recovered as by a miracle, for on the third morning the following letter was left at the palace: —

IRENE, — Ere this you have learned my deep cause of grief; you feel that to a Colonna, Rome can no longer be a home, nor Rome's Tribune be a brother. While I write these words honor but feebly supports me; all the hopes I had formed, all the prospects I had pictured, all the love I bore and bear thee, rush upon my heart, and I can only feel that I am wretched. Irene, Irene! your sweet face rises before me, and in those beloved eyes I read that I am forgiven, — I am understood; and dearly as I know thou lovest me, thou wouldst rather I were lost to thee, rather I were in the grave with my kinsmen, than know I lived the reproach of my order, the recreant of my name. Ah! why was I a Colonna; why did Fortune make me noble, and nature and circumstance attach me to the people? I am barred alike from love and from revenge; all my revenge falls upon thee and me. Adored! we are perhaps separated forever; but by all the happiness I have known by thy side, by all the rapture of which I dreamed, by that delicious hour which first gave thee to my gaze, when I watched the soft soul returning to thine eyes and lip, by thy first blushing confession of love, by our first kiss, by our last farewell, I swear to be faithful to thee to the last! None other shall ever chase thine image from my heart. And now, when Hope seems over, Faith becomes doubly sacred; and thou, my beautiful, wilt thou not remember me, — wilt thou not feel as if we were the betrothed of Heaven? In the legends of the North we are told of the knight who, returning from the Holy Land, found his mistress (believing his death) the bride of Heaven, and he built a hermitage by the convent where she dwelt; and though they never saw each other more, their souls were faithful unto death. Even so, Irene, be we to each other, — dead to all else, betrothed in memory, to be wedded above! And yet, yet ere I close, one hope dawns upon me. Thy brother's career, bright and lofty, may be but as a falling star: should darkness swallow it, should his power cease, should

his throne be broken, and Rome know no more her Tribune; shouldst thou no longer have a brother in the judge and destroyer of my house; shouldst thou be stricken from pomp and state; shouldst thou be friendless, kindredless, alone, — then, without a stain on mine honor, without the shame and odium of receiving power and happiness from hands yet red with the blood of my race, I may claim thee as my own. Honor ceases to command when thou ceasest to be great. I dare not too fondly indulge this dream, — perchance it is a sin in both. But it must be whispered, that thou mayest know all thy Adrian, all his weakness and his strength. My own loved, my ever loved, — loved more fondly now, when loved despairingly, — farewell! May angels heal thy sorrow, and guard me from sin, that *hereafter* at least we may meet again!

“He loves me, he loves me still!” said the maiden, weeping at last; “and I am blest once more!”

With that letter pressed to her heart, she recovered outwardly from the depth of her affliction; she met her brother with a smile, and Nina with embraces; and if still she pined and sorrowed, it was in that “concealment” which is the “worm i’ the bud.”

Meanwhile, after the first flush of victory, lamentation succeeded to joy in Rome; so great had been the slaughter that the private grief was large enough to swallow up all public triumph, and many of the mourners blamed even their defender for the swords of the assailant: *Roma fu terribilmente vedovata*.¹ The numerous funerals deeply affected the Tribune; and in proportion to his sympathy with his people, grew his stern indignation against the Barons. Like all men whose religion is intense, passionate, and zealous, the Tribune had little toleration for those crimes which went to the root of religion. Perjury was to him the most base and inexcusable of offences, and the slain Barons had been twice perjured. In the bitterness of his wrath he forbade their families for some days to lament over their remains; and it was only in private and in secret that he permitted them to be interred in their ancestral vaults, — an excess of vengeance which sullied his laurels, but which was scarcely inconsistent with the stern patriotism of his character. Impatient to finish what he had

¹ “Rome was terribly widowed.”

begun, anxious to march at once to Marino, where the insurgents collected their shattered force, he summoned his Council, and represented the certainty of victory, and its result in the complete restoration of peace. But pay was due to the soldiery; they already murmured; the treasury was emptied: it was necessary to fill it by raising a new tax.

Among the councillors were some whose families had suffered grievously in the battle: they lent a lukewarm attention to propositions of continued strife. Others, among whom was Pandulfo, timid but well-meaning, aware that grief and terror even of their own triumph had produced reaction amongst the people, declared that they would not venture to propose a new tax. A third party, headed by Baroncelli, — a demagogue whose ambition was without principle, but who, by pandering to the worst passions of the populace, by a sturdy coarseness of nature with which they sympathized, and by that affectation of advancing what we now term the “movement,” which often gives to the fiercest fool an advantage over the most prudent statesman, had quietly acquired a great influence with the lower ranks, — offered a more bold opposition. They dared even to blame the proud Tribune for the gorgeous extravagance they had themselves been the first to recommend, and half insinuated sinister and treacherous motives in his acquittal of the Barons from the accusation of Rodolf. In the very Parliament which the Tribune had revived and remodelled for the support of freedom, freedom was abandoned. His fiery eloquence met with a gloomy silence, and, finally, the votes were against his propositions for the new tax and the march to Marino. Rienzi broke up the Council in haste and disorder. As he left the hall, a letter was put into his hands; he read it, and remained for some moments as one thunderstruck. He then summoned the Captain of his Guards, and ordered a band of fifty horsemen to be prepared for his commands; he repaired to Nina’s apartment, he found her alone, and stood for some moments gazing upon her so intently that she was awed and chilled from all attempt at speech. At length he said abruptly, —

“We must part.”

"Part?"

"Yes, Nina; your guard is preparing. You have relations, I have friends, at Florence; Florence must be your home."

"Cola —"

"Look not on me thus. In power, in state, in safety, you were my ornament and counsellor. *Now* you but embarrass me. And —"

"Oh, Cola, speak not thus! What hath chanced? Be not so cold, frown not, turn not away! Am I not something more to thee than the partner of joyous hours, the minion of love? Am I not thy wife, Cola, — not thy leman?"

"Too dear, too dear to me," muttered the Tribune; "with thee by my side I shall be but half a Roman. Nina, the base slaves whom I myself made free, desert me. Now, in the very hour in which I might sweep away forever all obstacles to the regeneration of Rome; now, when one conquest points the path to complete success; now, when the land is visible, — my fortune suddenly leaves me in the midst of the seas! There is greater danger now than in the rage of the Barons, — the Barons are fled; it is the People who are becoming traitors to Rome and to me."

"And wouldst thou have *me* traitor also? No, Cola; in death itself Nina shall be beside thee. Life and honor are reflected but from thee, and the stroke that slays the substance shall destroy the humble shadow. I will not part from thee."

"Nina," said the Tribune, contending with strong and convulsive emotion, "it may be literally of *death* that you speak. Go; leave one who can no longer protect you or Rome!"

"Never, never!"

"You are resolved?"

"I am."

"Be it so," said the Tribune, with deep sadness in his tone
"Arm thyself for the worst."

"There is no *worst* with thee, Cola!"

"Come to my arms, brave woman; thy words rebuke my weakness! But my sister! If *I* fall, *you*, Nina, will not survive, — your beauty a prey to the most lustful heart and the

strongest hand; *we* will have the same tomb on the wrecks of Roman liberty. But Irene is of weaker mould. Poor child! I have robbed her of a lover, and now — ”

“You are right: let Irene go. And in truth we may well disguise from her the real cause of her departure. Change of scene were best for her grief, and under all circumstances would seem decorum to the curious. I will see and prepare her.”

“Do so, sweetheart; I would gladly be a moment alone with thought. But remember, she must part to-day: our sands run low.”

As the door closed on Nina, the Tribune took out the letter and again read it deliberately. “So the Pope’s Legate left Sienna; prayed that Republic to withdraw its auxiliary troops from Rome; proclaimed me a rebel and a heretic; thence repaired to Marino; now in council with the Barons. Why, have my dreams belied me, then, — false as the waking things that flatter and betray by day? In such peril will the people forsake me and themselves? Army of saints and martyrs, shades of heroes and patriots, have ye abandoned forever your ancient home? No, no; I was not raised to perish thus. I will defeat them yet, and leave my name a legacy to Rome, — a warning to the oppressor, an example to the free!”

CHAPTER V.

THE ROTTENNESS OF THE EDIFICE.

THE kindly skill of Nina induced Irene to believe that it was but the tender consideration of her brother to change a scene embittered by her own thoughts, and in which the notoriety of her engagement with Adrian exposed her to all that could mortify and embarrass, that led to the proposition of her visit to Florence. Its suddenness was ascribed to the occasion of an unexpected mission to Florence (for a loan of arms and money), which thus gave her a safe and honored escort. Passively she

submitted to what she herself deemed a relief; and it was agreed that she should for a while be the guest of a relation of Nina's who was the abbess of one of the wealthiest of the Florentine convents: the idea of monastic seclusion was welcome to the bruised heart and wearied spirit.

But though not apprised of the immediate peril of Rienzi, it was with deep sadness and gloomy forebodings that she returned his embrace and parting blessing; and when at length alone in her litter and beyond the gates of Rome, she repented a departure to which the chance of danger gave the appearance of desertion.

Meanwhile, as the declining day closed around the litter and its troop, more turbulent actors in the drama demand our audience. The traders and artisans of Rome at that time, and especially during the popular government of Rienzi, held weekly meetings in each of the thirteen quarters of the city. And in the most democratic of these, Cecco del Vecchio was an oracle and leader. It was at that assembly, over which the smith presided, that the murmurs that preceded the earthquake were heard.

"So," cried one of the company, Luigi, the goodly butcher, "they say he wanted to put a new tax on us; and that is the reason he broke up the Council to-day, because, good men, they were honest, and had bowels for the people: it is a shame and a sin that the treasury should be empty."

"I told him," said the smith, "to beware how he taxed the people. Poor men won't be taxed. But as he does not follow my advice, he must take the consequence: the horse runs from one hand, the halter remains in the other."

"Take *your* advice, Cecco! I warrant me his stomach is too high for that now. Why, he is grown as proud as a pope."

"For all that, he is a great man," said one of the party. "He gave us laws, he rid the Campagna of robbers, filled the streets with merchants, and the shops with wares, defeated the boldest lords and fiercest soldiery of Italy —"

"And now wants to tax the people! That's all the thanks we get for helping him," said the grumbling Cecco.

"What would he have been without us? We that make can unmake."

"But," continued the advocate, seeing that he had his supporters, "but then he taxes us for our own liberties."

"Who strikes at them now?" asked the butcher.

"Why, the Barons are daily mustering new strength at Marino."

"Marino is not Rome," said Luigi, the butcher. "Let's wait till they come to our gates again; we know how to receive them. Though, for the matter of that, I think we have had enough fighting, — my two poor brothers had each a stab too much for them. Why won't the Tribune, if he *be* a great man, let us have peace? All we want now is quiet."

"Ah!" said a seller of horse-harness, "let him make it up with the Barons. They were good customers, after all."

"For my part," said a merry-looking fellow, who had been a gravedigger in bad times, and had now opened a stall of wares for the living, "I could forgive him all, but bathing in the holy vase of porphyry."

"Ah, that was a bad job!" said several, shaking their heads.

"And the knighthood was but a silly show, an' it were not for the wine from the horse's nostrils, — *that* had some sense in it."

"My masters," said Cecco, "the folly was in not beheading the Barons when he had them all in the net; and so Messere Baroncelli says. (Ah! Baroncelli is an honest man, and follows no half measures.) It was a sort of treason to the people not to do so. Why, but for that we should never have lost so many tall fellows by the gate of San Lorenzo."

"True, true! it was a shame; some say the Barons bought him."

"And then," said another, "those poor Lords Colonna, — boy and man, — they were the best of the family, save the Castello. I vow I pitied them."

"But to the point," said one of the crowd, *the richest* of the set: "*the tax is the thing*. The ingratitude to tax *us*! Let him dare to do it!"

"Oh! he will not dare, for I hear that the Pope's bristles are up at last; so he will only have *us* to depend upon!"

The door was thrown open, a man rushed in open-mouthed, —

"Masters, masters, the Pope's legate has arrived at Rome and sent for the Tribune, who has just left his presence."

Ere his auditors had recovered their surprise, the sound of trumpets made them rush forth; they saw Rienzi sweep by with his usual cavalcade and in his proud array. The twilight was advancing, and torch-bearers preceded his way. Upon his countenance was deep calm, but it was not the calm of contentment. He passed on, and the street was again desolate. Meanwhile Rienzi reached the Capitol in silence, and mounted to the apartments of the palace, where Nina, pale and breathless, awaited his return.

"Well, well, thou smilest! No, — it is that dread smile, worse than frowns. Speak, beloved, speak! What said the Cardinal?"

"Little thou wilt love to hear. He spoke at first, high and solemnly, about the crime of declaring the Romans free; next about the treason of asserting that the election of the King of Rome was in the hands of the Romans."

"Well, thy answer?"

"That which became Rome's Tribune: I re-asserted each right, and proved it. The Cardinal passed to other charges."

"What?"

"The blood of the Barons by San Lorenzo, — blood only shed in our own defence against perjured assailants: this is in reality the main crime. The Colonna have the Pope's ear. Furthermore, the sacrilege, — yes, the sacrilege (come laugh, Nina, laugh!) of bathing in a vase of prophyry used by Constantine while yet a heathen!"

"Can it be! What saidst thou?"

"I laughed. 'Cardinal,' quoth I, 'what was not too good for a heathen is not too good for a Christian Catholic!' And verily the sour Frenchman looked as if I had smote him on the hip. When he had done, I asked him, in my turn, 'Is it alleged against me that I have wronged one man in my judgment-court?' Silence. 'Is it said that I have broken one law of

the state ?' Silence. 'Is it even whispered that trade does not flourish, that life is not safe, that, abroad or at home, the Roman name is not honored to that point which no former rule can parallel ?' Silence. 'Then,' said I, 'Lord Cardinal, I demand thy thanks, not thy censure.' The Frenchman looked and looked, and trembled and shrank, and then out he spoke. 'I have but one mission to fulfil, on the part of the Pontiff: resign at once thy Tribuneship, or the Church inflicts upon thee its solemn curse.' "

"How, how ?" said Nina, turning very pale; "what is it that awaits thee ?"

"Excommunication !"

This awful sentence, by which the spiritual arm had so often stricken down the fiercest foe, came to Nina's ears as a knell. She covered her face with her hands. Rienzi paced the room with rapid strides. "The curse !" he muttered; "the Church's curse, — for me, for ME !"

"Oh, Cola ! didst thou not seek to pacify this stern —"

"Pacify ! Death and dishonor ! Pacify ! 'Cardinal,' I said, and I felt his soul shrivel at my gaze, 'my power I received from the people, — to the people alone I render it. For my soul, man's words cannot scathe it. Thou, haughty priest, thou thyself art the accursed if, puppet and tool of low cabals and exiled tyrants, thou breathest but a breath in the name of the Lord of Justice for the cause of the oppressor and against the rights of the oppressed.' With that I left him ; and now —"

"Ay, now, now what will happen ? Excommunication ! In the metropolis of the Church, too ; the superstition of the people ! Oh, Cola !"

"If," muttered Rienzi, "my conscience condemned me of one crime ; if I had stained my hands in one just man's blood ; if I had broken one law I myself had framed ; if I had taken bribes, or wronged the poor, or scorned the orphan, or shut my heart to the widow, — then, then — But no ! Lord, *thou* wilt not desert me !"

"But *man* may !" thought Nina, mournfully, as she perceived that one of Rienzi's dark fits of fanatical and mystical revery was growing over him, — fits which he suffered no liv-

ing eye, not even Nina's, to witness when they gathered to their height. And now, indeed, after a short interval of muttered soliloquy, in which his face worked so that the veins on his temples swelled like cords, he abruptly left the room and sought the private oratory connected with his closet. Over the emotions there indulged let us draw the veil. Who shall describe those awful and mysterious moments when man, with all his fiery passions, turbulent thoughts, wild hopes, and despondent fears, demands the solitary audience of his Maker ?

It was long after this conference with Nina, and the midnight bell had long tolled, when Rienzi stood alone, upon one of the balconies of the palace, to cool, in the starry air, the fever that yet lingered on his exhausted frame. The night was exceedingly calm, the air clear, but chill, for it was now December. He gazed intently upon those solemn orbs to which our wild credulity has referred the prophecies of our doom.

"Vain science!" thought the Tribune, "and gloomy fantasy, that man's fate is pre-ordained, irrevocable, unchangeable, from the moment of his birth! Yet were the dream not baseless, fain would I know which of yon stately lights is my natal star, — which images, which reflects, my career in life, and the memory I shall leave in death." As this thought crossed him, and his gaze was still fixed above, he saw, as if made suddenly more distinct than the stars around it, that rapid and fiery comet which in the winter of 1347 dismayed the superstitions of those who recognized in the stranger of the heavens the omen of disaster and of woe. He recoiled as it met his eye, and muttered to himself: "Is such indeed my type? Or if the legendary lore speak true, and these strange fires portend nations ruined and rulers overthrown, does it foretell my fate? I will think no more."¹ As his eyes fell, they rested upon the colossal Lion of Basalt in the place below, the starlight investing its gray and towering form with a more ghostly whiteness; and then it was that he perceived two figures in

¹ Alas! if by the Romans associated with the fall of Rienzi, that comet was by the rest of Europe connected with the more dire calamity of the Great Plague that so soon afterwards ensued.

black robes lingering by the pedestal which supported the statue, and apparently engaged in some occupation which he could not guess. A fear shot through his veins, for he had never been able to divest himself of the vague idea that there was some solemn and appointed connection between his fate and that old Lion of Basalt. Somewhat relieved, he heard his sentry challenge the intruders; and as they came forward to the light, he perceived that they wore the garments of monks.

"Molest us not, son," said one of them to the sentry. "By order of the Legate of the Holy Father we affix to this public monument of justice and of wrath the bull of excommunication against a heretic and rebel. WOE TO THE ACCURSED OF THE CHURCH!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALL OF THE TEMPLE.

It was as a thunderbolt in a serene day, — the reverse of the Tribune in the zenith of his power, in the abasement of his foe, when with but a handful of brave Romans, determined to be free, he might have crushed forever the antagonist power to the Roman liberties, have secured the rights of his country, and filled up the measures of his own renown. Such a reverse was the very mockery of Fate, who bore him through disaster, to abandon him in the sunniest noon of his prosperity.

The next morning not a soul was to be seen in the streets; the shops were shut, the churches closed: the city was as under an interdict. The awful curse of the papal excommunication upon the chief magistrate of the Pontifical city seemed to freeze up all the arteries of life. The Legate himself, affecting fear of his life, had fled to Monte Fiascone, where he was joined by the Barons immediately after the publication of the edict. The curse worked best in the absence of the execrator.

Towards evening a few persons might be seen traversing the broad space of the Capitol, crossing themselves as the bull, placarded on the Lion, met their eyes, and disappearing within the doors of the great palace. By and by a few anxious groups collected in the streets, but they soon dispersed. It was a paralysis of all intercourse and commune. That spiritual and unarmed authority, which, like the invisible hand of God, desolated the market-place and humbled the crowned head, no physical force could rally against or resist. Yet through the universal awe one conviction touched the multitude, — it was for them that the Tribune was thus blasted in the midst of his glories! The words of the Brand recorded against him on wall and column detailed his offences, — rebellion in asserting the liberties of Rome; heresy in purifying ecclesiastical abuses; and to serve for a miserable covert to the rest, it was sacrilege for bathing in the porphyry vase of Constantine! They felt the conviction, they sighed, they shuddered, and in his vast palace, save a few attached and devoted hearts, the Tribune was alone!

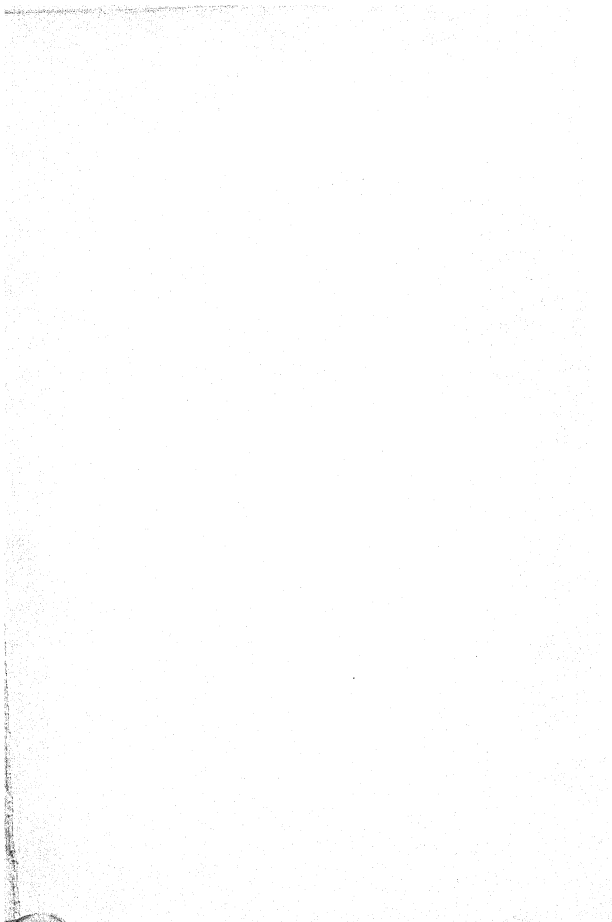
The stanchest of the Tuscan soldiery was gone with Irene. The rest of the force, save a few remaining guards, was the paid Roman militia, composed of citizens, who, long discontented by the delay of their stipends, now seized on the excuse of the excommunication to remain passive, but grumbling, in their homes.

On the third day a new incident broke upon the death-like lethargy of the city: a hundred and fifty mercenaries, with Pepin of Minorbino, a Neapolitan, half noble, half bandit (a creature of Montreal's), at their head, entered the city, seized upon the fortresses of the Colonna, and sent a herald through the city proclaiming, in the name of the Cardinal Legate, the reward of ten thousand florins for the head of Cola di Rienzi.

Then swelled on high, shrill, but not inspiring, as of old, the great bell of the Capitol; the people, listless, disheartened, awed by the spiritual fear of the papal authority (yet greater, in such events, since the removal of the see), came unarmed to the Capitol; and there, by the Place of the Lion, stood the



PIAZZA COLONNA.



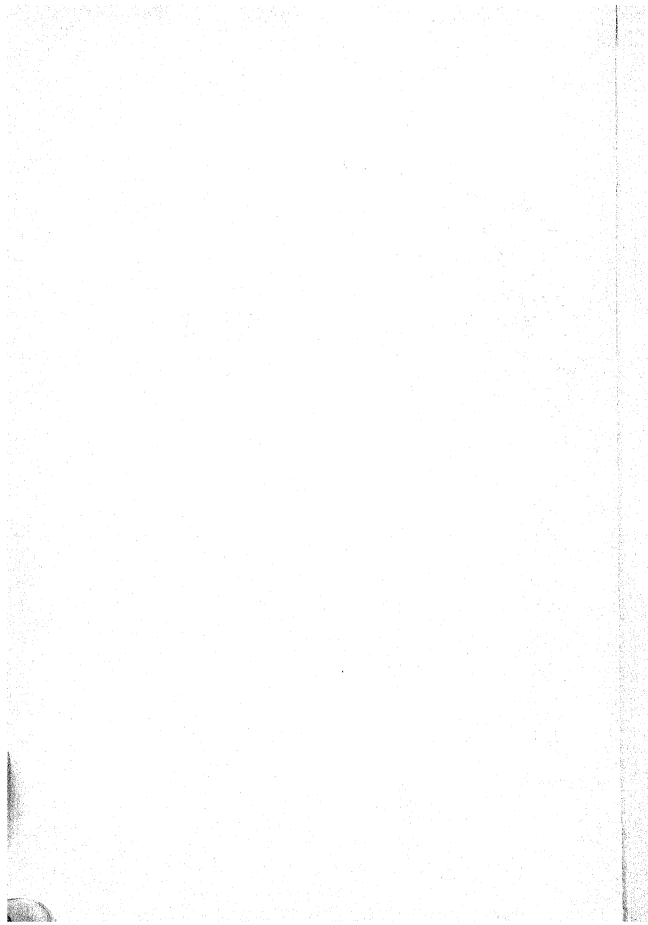
Tribune. His squires, below the step, held his war-horse, his helm, and the same battle-axe which had blazed in the van of victorious war.

Beside him were a few of his guard, his attendants, and two or three of the principal citizens.

He stood bareheaded and erect, gazing upon the abashed and unarmed crowd with a look of bitter scorn, mingled with deep compassion; and as the bell ceased to toll, and the throng remained hushed and listening, he thus spoke:—

“Ye come, then, once again! Come ye as slaves, or free-men? A handful of armed men are in your walls: will ye who chased from your gates the haughtiest knights, the most practised battle-men of Rome, succumb now to one hundred and fifty hirelings and strangers? Will ye arm for your Tribune? Ye are silent! Be it so. Will you arm for *your own* liberties, — *your own* Rome? Silent still! By the saints that reign on the thrones of the heathen gods, are you thus fallen from your birthright? Have you no arms for your own defence? Romans, hear me! Have I wronged you? If so, by *your* hands let me die; and then, with knives yet reeking with my blood, go forward against the robber who is but the herald of your slavery, and I die honored, grateful, and avenged. You weep! Great God, you weep! Ah! and I could weep, too, that I should live to speak of liberty in vain to Romans. Weep! is this an hour for tears? Weep now; and your tears shall ripen harvests of crime and license and despotism to come! Romans, arm! Follow me at once to the Place of the Colonna; expel this ruffian, expel your enemy (no matter what afterwards you do to me),” — he paused; no ardor was kindled by his words, — “or,” he continued, “I abandon you to your fate.” There was a long, low, general murmur; at length it became shaped into speech, and many voices cried simultaneously: “The Pope’s bull; thou art a man accursed!”

“What!” cried the Tribune; “and is it *ye* who forsake me, — ye for whose cause alone man dares to hurl against me the thunders of his God? Is it not for *you* that I am declared heretic and rebel? What are my imputed crimes? That I



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have *made* Rome, and *asserted* Italy to be free; that I have subdued the proud magnates who were the scourge both of Pope and People. And you,—you upbraid me with what I have dared and done for you! Men, *with* you I have fought, *for* you I would have perished. You forsake yourselves in forsaking me; and since I no longer rule over brave men, I resign my power to the tyrant you prefer. Seven months I have ruled over you,—prosperous in commerce, stainless in justice, victorious in the field; I have shown you what Rome could be; and since I abdicate the government ye gave me, when I am gone, strike for your own freedom! It matters nothing who is the chief of a brave and great people. Prove that Rome hath many a Rienzi, but of brighter fortunes.”

“I would he had not sought to tax us,” said Cecco del Vecchio, who was the very personification of the vulgar feeling, “and that he had beheaded the Barons!”

“Ay!” cried the ex-gravedigger; “but that blessed porphyry vase!”

“And why should we get our throats cut,” said Luigi, the butcher, “like my two brothers, Heaven rest them!”

On the face of the general multitude there was a common expression of irresolution and shame; many wept and groaned; none (save the aforesaid grumblers) *accused*; none upbraided, but none seemed disposed to arm. It was one of those listless panics, those strange fits of indifference and lethargy which often seize upon a people who make liberty a matter of impulse and caprice, to whom it has become a catchword, who have not long enjoyed all its rational and sound and practical and blessed results, who have been affrayed by the storms that herald its dawn,—a people such as is common to the South; such as even the North has known; such as, had Cromwell lived a year longer, even England might have seen,—and indeed, in some measure, such a reaction from popular enthusiasm to popular indifference England *did* see when her children madly surrendered the fruits of the bloody war, without reserve, without foresight, to the lewd pensioner of Louis and the royal murderer of Sydney. To such prostration of soul, such blindness of intellect, even the noblest people

will be subjected, when liberty, which should be the growth of ages, spreading its roots through the strata of a thousand customs, is raised, the exotic of an hour, and (like the Tree and Dryad of ancient fable) flourishes and withers with the single spirit that protects it.

"Oh, Heaven, that I were a man!" exclaimed Angelo, who stood behind Rienzi.

"Hear him, hear the boy," cried the Tribune; "out of the mouths of babes speaketh wisdom! He wishes that he were a man, as ye are men, that he might do as ye should do. Mark me! I ride with these faithful few through the quarter of the Colonna, before the fortress of your foe. Three times before that fortress shall my trumpet sound: if at the third blast ye come not, armed as befits ye, — I say not all, but three, but two, but *one* hundred of ye, — I break up my wand of office, and the world shall say one hundred and fifty robbers quelled the soul of Rome and crushed her magistrate and her laws!"

With those words he descended the stairs and mounted his charger; the populace gave way in silence, and their Tribune and his slender train passed slowly on, and gradually vanished from the view of the increasing crowd.

The Romans remained on the place, and after a pause, the demagogue Baroncelli, who saw an opening to his ambition, addressed them. Though not an eloquent nor gifted man, he had the art of uttering the most popular commonplaces. And he knew the weak side of his audience, in their vanity, indolence, and arrogant pride.

"Look you, my masters," said he, leaping up to the Place of the Lion, "the Tribune talks bravely, — he always did; but the monkey used the cat for his chestnuts: he wants to thrust your paws into the fire; you will not be so silly as to let him. The saints bless us! But the Tribune, good man, gets a palace and has banquets, and bathes in a porphyry vase — the more shame on him! — in which San Sylvester christened the Emperor Constantine. All this is worth fighting for; but you, my masters, what do *you* get, except hard blows and a stare at a holiday spectacle? Why, if you beat

these fellows, you will have another tax on the wine: *that* will be *your* reward!"

"Hark!" cried Cecco, "there sounds the trumpet, — a pity he wanted to tax us!"

"True," cried Baroncelli, "there sounds the trumpet, — a *silver* trumpet, by the Lord! Next week, if you help him out of the scrape, he'll have a golden one. But go, — why don't you move, my friends? — 't is but one hundred and fifty mercenaries. True, they are devils to fight, clad in armor from top to toe; but what then? — if they do cut some four or five hundred throats, you'll beat them at last, and the Tribune will sup the merrier."

"There sounds the second blast," said the butcher. "If my old mother had not lost two of us already, 't is odds but I'd strike a blow for the bold Tribune."

"You had better put more quicksilver in you," continued Baroncelli, "or you will be too late. And what a pity that will be! If you believe the Tribune, he is the only man that can save Rome. What, you, the finest people in the world, — you not able to save yourselves; you bound up with one man; you not able to dictate to the Colonna and Orsini! Why, who beat the Barons at San Lorenzo? Was it not you? Ah! you got the buffets, and the Tribune the *moneta*! Tush! my friends, let the man go; I warrant there are plenty as good as he to be bought a cheaper bargain. And hark! there is the third blast; it is too late now!"

As the trumpet from the distance sent forth its long and melancholy note, it was as the last warning of the parting genius of the place; and when silence swallowed up the sound, a gloom fell over the whole assembly. They began to regret, to repent, when regret and repentance availed no more. The buffoonery of Baroncelli became suddenly displeasing; and the orator had the mortification of seeing his audience disperse in all directions just as he was about to inform them what great things he himself could do in their behalf.

Meanwhile the Tribune, passing unscathed through the dangerous quarter of the enemy, who, dismayed at his approach, shrank within their fortress, proceeded to the Castle

of St. Angelo, whither Nina had already preceded him, and which he entered to find that proud lady with a smile for his safety, without a tear for his reverse.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUCCESSORS OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION — WHO IS TO BLAME, THE FORSAKEN ONE, OR THE FORSAKERS ?

CHEERFULLY broke the winter sun over the streets of Rome as the army of the Barons swept along them, the Cardinal Legate at the head, the old Colonna (no longer haughty and erect, but bowed, and broken-hearted at the loss of his sons) at his right hand ; the sleek smile of Luca Savelli, the black frown of Rinaldo Orsini, were seen close behind. A long but barbarous array it was, made up chiefly of foreign hirelings ; nor did the procession resemble the return of exiled citizens, but the march of invading foes.

"My Lord Colonna," said the Cardinal Legate, a small, withered man, by birth a Frenchman, and full of the bitterest prejudices against the Romans, who had in a former mission very ill received him, as was their wont with foreign ecclesiastics, "this Pepin, whom Montreal has deputed at your orders, hath done us indeed good service."

The old lord bowed, but made no answer. His strong intellect was already broken, and there was dotage in his glassy eye. The Cardinal muttered, "He hears me not ; sorrow hath brought him to second childhood !" and looking back, motioned to Luca Savelli to approach.

"Luca," said the Legate, "it was fortunate that the Hungarian's black banner detained the Provençal at Aversa. Had he entered Rome, we might have found Rienzi's successor worse than the Tribune himself. Montreal," he added, with slight emphasis and a curled lip, "is a gentleman and a Frenchman. This Pepin, who is his delegate, we must bribe, or menace to our will."

"Assuredly," answered Savelli, "it is not a difficult task; for Montreal calculated on a more stubborn contest, which he himself would have found leisure to close —"

"As Podesta, or Prince of Rome, — the modest man! We Frenchmen have a due sense of our own merits; but this sudden victory surprises him as it doth us, Luca; and we shall wrest the prey from Pepin ere Montreal can come to his help! But Rienzi must die. He is still, I hear, shut up in St. Angelo. The Orsini shall storm him there ere the day be much older. To-day we possess the Capitol, annul all the rebel's laws, break up his ridiculous parliament, and put all the government of the city under three senators, — Rinaldo Orsini, Colonna, and myself. You, my lord, I trust, we shall fitly provide for."

"Oh! I am rewarded enough by returning to my palace; and a descent on the Jewellers' quarter will soon build up its fortifications. Luca Savelli is not an ambitious man. He wants but to live in peace."

The Cardinal smiled sourly, and took the turn towards the Capitol.

In the front space the usual gapers were assembled. "Make way, make way, knaves!" cried the guards, trampling on either side the crowd, who, accustomed to the sedate and courteous order of Rienzi's guard, fell back too slowly for many of them to escape severe injury from the pikes of the soldiers and the hoofs of the horses. Our friend Luigi the butcher was one of these, and the surliness of the Roman blood was past boiling heat when he received in his ample stomach the blunt end of a German's pike. "There, Roman," said the rude mercenary, in his barbarous attempt at Italian, "make way for your betters; you have had enough crowds and shows of late, in all conscience."

"Betters!" gulped out the poor butcher, "a Roman has no betters; and if I had not lost two brothers by San Lorenzo, I would —"

"The dog is mutinous," said one of the followers of the Orsini, succeeding the German, who had passed on, "and talks of San Lorenzo!"

"Oh!" said another Orsinist, who rode abreast, "I remember him of old. He was one of Rienzi's gang."

"Was he?" said the other, sternly; "then we cannot begin salutary examples too soon;" and, offended at something swaggering and insolent in the butcher's look, the Orsinist coolly thrust him through the heart with his pike, and rode on over his body.

"Shame! shame!" "Murder! murder!" cried the crowd; and they began to press, in the passion of the moment, round the fierce guards.

The Legate heard the cry and saw the rush; he turned pale. "The rascals rebel again!" he faltered.

"No, your Eminence, no," said Luca; "but it may be as well to infuse a wholesome terror. They are all unarmed: let me bid the guards disperse them; a word will do it."

The Cardinal assented, the word was given, and in a few minutes the soldiery, who still smarted under the vindictive memory of defeat from an undisciplined multitude, scattered the crowd down the street without scruple or mercy, riding over some, spearing others, filling the air with shrieks and yells, and strewing the ground with almost as many men as a few days before would have sufficed to have guarded Rome and preserved the constitution! Through this wild, tumultuous scene, and over the bodies of its victims, rode the Legate and his train, to receive in the Hall of the Capitol the allegiance of the citizens and to proclaim the return of the oppressors.

As they dismounted at the stairs, a placard in large letters struck the eye of the Legate. It was placed upon the pedestal of the Lion of Basalt, covering the very place that had been occupied by the bull of excommunication. The words were few, and ran thus:—

"TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!"

"How! what means this mummary?" cried the Legate, trembling already, and looking round to the nobles.

"Please your Eminence," said one of the councillors, who had come from the Capitol to meet the Legate, "we saw it at daybreak, the ink yet moist, as we entered the Hall. We deemed it best to leave it for your Eminence to deal with."

"*You* deemed! Who are *you*, then?"

"One of the members of the Council, your Eminence, and a staunch opponent of the Tribune, as is well known, when he wanted the new tax —"

"Council — trash! No more councils now! Order is restored at last. The Orsini and the Colonna will look to you in future. Resist a tax, did you? Well, that was right when proposed by a tyrant; but *I* warn you, friend, to take care how you resist the tax *we* shall impose. Happy if your city can buy its peace with the Church on any terms, and his Holiness is short of the florins."

The discomfited councillor shrank back.

"Tear off yon insolent placard. Nay, hold! Fix over it our proclamation of ten thousand florins for the heretic's head! *Ten* thousand? Methinks that is too much *now*; we will alter the cipher. Meanwhile Rinaldo Orsini, Lord Senator, march thy soldiers to St. Angelo; let us see if the heretic can stand a siege."

"It needs not, your Eminence," said the councillor, again officiously bustling up; "St. Angelo is surrendered. The Tribune, his wife, and one page escaped last night, it is said, in disguise."

"Ha!" said the old Colonna, whose dulled sense had at length arrived at the conclusion that something extraordinary arrested the progress of his friends. "What is the matter? What is that placard? Will no one tell me the words? My old eyes are dim."

As he uttered the questions, in the shrill and piercing treble of age, a voice replied in a loud and deep tone, — none knew whence it came; the crowd was reduced to a few stragglers, chiefly friars in cowl and serge, whose curiosity nought could daunt, and whose garb insured them safety; the soldiers closed the rear: a voice, I say, came, startling the color from many a cheek, — in answer to the Colonna, saying: —

"TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!"

BOOK VI.

THE PLAGUE.

ERANO gli anni della fruttifera Incarnazione del Figliuolo di Dio al numero pervenuti di mille trecento quarant' otto, quando nell' egregia città di Firenze oltre ad ogni altra Italica bellissima, pervenne la mortifera pestilenza. — BOCCACCIO, *Introduzione al Decamerone*.

The years of the fructiferous incarnation of the Son of God had reached the number of one thousand three hundred and forty-eight, when into the illustrious city of Florence, beautiful beyond every other in Italy, entered the death-fraught pestilence. — *Introduction to the Decameron*.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETREAT OF THE LOVER.

By the borders of one of the fairest lakes of Northern Italy stood the favorite mansion of Adrian di Castello, to which in his softer and less patriotic moments his imagination had often and fondly turned ; and thither the young nobleman, dismissing his more courtly and distinguished companions in the Neapolitan embassy, retired after his ill-starred return to Rome. Most of those thus dismissed joined the Barons ; the young Annibaldi, whose daring and ambitious nature had attached him strongly to the Tribune, maintained a neutral ground ; he betook himself to his castle in the Campagna, and did not return to Rome till the expulsion of Rienzi.

The retreat of Irene's lover was one well fitted to feed his melancholy reveries. Without being absolutely a fortress, it was sufficiently strong to resist any assault of the mountain robbers or petty tyrants in the vicinity ; while, built by some

former lord from the materials of the half-ruined villas of the ancient Romans, its marbled columns and tessellated pavements relieved with a wild grace the gray stone walls and massive towers of feudal masonry. Rising from a green eminence gently sloping to the lake, the stately pile cast its shadow far and dark over the beautiful waters; by its side, from the high and wooded mountains on the background, broke a waterfall in irregular and sinuous course, now hid by the foliage, now gleaming in the light, and collecting itself at last in a broad basin, beside which a little fountain, inscribed with half-obliterated letters, attested the departed elegance of the classic age, — some memento of lord and poet whose very names were lost; thence descending through mosses and lichen and odorous herbs, a brief, sheeted stream bore its surplus into the lake. And there, amidst the sturdier and bolder foliage of the North, grew, wild and picturesque, many a tree transplanted, in ages back, from the sunnier East, — not blighted nor stunted in that golden clime, which fosters almost every produce of nature as with a mother's care. The place was remote and solitary. The roads that conducted to it from the distant towns were tangled, intricate, mountainous, and beset by robbers. A few cottages and a small convent, a quarter of a league up the verdant margin, were the nearest habitations; and save by some occasional pilgrim or some bewildered traveller, the loneliness of the mansion was rarely invaded. It was precisely the spot which proffered rest to a man weary of the world, and indulged the memories which grow in rank luxuriance over the wrecks of passion. And he whose mind, at once gentle and self-dependent, can endure solitude, might have ransacked all earth for a more fair and undisturbed retreat.

But not to such a solitude had the earlier dreams of Adrian dedicated the place. Here, had he thought, should one bright being have presided; here should love have found its haven; and hither, when love at length admitted of intrusion, hither might wealth and congenial culture have invited all the gentler and better spirits which had begun to move over the troubled face of Italy, promising a second and younger empire of poesy and lore and art. To the graceful and romantic, but some-

what pensive and inert, temperament of the young noble, more adapted to the calm and civilized than stormy and barbarous times, ambition proffered no reward so grateful as lettered leisure and intellectual repose. His youth colored by the influence of Petrarch, his manhood had dreamed of a happier Vauchuse, not untenanted by a Laura. The visions which had connected the scene with the image of Irene made the place still haunted by her shade; and time and absence, only ministering to his impassioned meditations, deepened his melancholy and increased his love.

In this lone retreat, which even in describing from memory,—for these eyes have seen, these feet have trodden, this heart yet yearneth for, the spot—which even, I say, in thus describing, seems to me (and haply also to the gentle reader) a grateful and welcome transit from the storms of action and the vicissitudes of ambition, so long engrossing the narrative,—in this lone retreat Adrian passed the winter, which visits with so mild a change that intoxicating clime. The roar of the world without was borne but in faint and indistinct murmurings to his ear. He learned only imperfectly, and with many contradictions, the news which broke like a thunderbolt over Italy, that the singular and aspiring man—himself a revolution—who had excited the interest of all Europe, the brightest hopes of the enthusiastic, the profusest adulation of the great, the deepest terror of the despot, the wildest aspirations of all free spirits, had been suddenly stricken from his state, his name branded and his head proscribed. This event, which happened at the end of December, reached Adrian, through a wandering pilgrim, at the commencement of March, somewhat more than two months after the date,—the March of that awful year 1348, which saw Europe, and Italy especially, desolated by the direst pestilence which history has recorded, accursed alike by the numbers and the celebrity of its victims, and yet strangely connected with some not unpleasing images by the grace of Boccaccio and the eloquence of Petrarch.

The pilgrim who informed Adrian of the Revolution at Rome was unable to give him any clew to the present fate of Rienzi or his family. It was only known that the Tribune and his wife

had escaped, none knew whither ; many guessed that they were already dead, — victims to the numerous robbers who immediately on the fall of the Tribune settled back to their former habits, sparing neither age nor sex, wealth nor poverty. As all relating to the ex-Tribune was matter of eager interest, the pilgrim had also learned that, previous to the fall of Rienzi, his sister had left Rome, but it was not known to what place she had been conveyed.

The news utterly roused Adrian from his dreaming life. Irene was then in the condition his letter dared to picture, — severed from her brother, fallen from her rank, desolate and friendless. “Now,” said the generous and high-hearted lover, “she may be mine without a disgrace to my name. Whatever Rienzi’s faults, she is not implicated in them. *Her* hands are not red with my kinsman’s blood, nor can men say that Adrian di Castello allies himself with a House whose power is built upon the ruins of the Colonna. The Colonna are restored, — again triumphant ; Rienzi is nothing : distress and misfortune unite me at once to her on whom they fall !”

But how were these romantic resolutions to be executed, Irene’s dwelling-place unknown ? He resolved himself to repair to Rome and make the necessary inquiries ; accordingly, he summoned his retainers, — blithe tidings to them, those of travel ! The mail left the armory, the banner the hall, and after two days of animated bustle, the fountain by which Adrian had passed so many hours of revery was haunted only by the birds of the returning spring, and the nightly lamp no longer cast its solitary ray from his turret-chamber over the bosom of the deserted lake.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEEKER.

It was a bright, oppressive, sultry morning, when a solitary horseman was seen winding that unequalled road, from whose height, amidst fig-trees, vines, and olives, the traveller beholds gradually break upon his gaze the enchanting valley of the Arno, and the spires and domes of Florence. But not with the traveller's customary eye of admiration and delight passed that solitary horseman, and not upon the usual activity and mirth and animation of the Tuscan life broke that noonday sun. All was silent, void and hushed, and even in the light of heaven there seemed a sicklied and ghastly glare. The cottages by the roadside were some shut up and closed, some open, but seemingly inmateless. The plough stood still, the distaff plied not; horse and man had a dreary holiday. There was a darker curse upon the land than the curse of Cain! Now and then a single figure, usually clad in the gloomy robe of a friar, crossed the road, lifting towards the traveller a livid and amazed stare, and then hurried on, and vanished beneath some roof, whence issued a faint and dying moan, which but for the exceeding stillness around could scarcely have pierced the threshold. As the traveller neared the city, the scene became less solitary, yet more dread. There might be seen carts and litters, thick awnings wrapped closely round them, containing those who sought safety in flight, forgetful that the Plague was everywhere! And while these gloomy vehicles, conducted by horses, gaunt, shadowy skeletons, crawling heavily along, passed by, like hearses of the dead, sometimes a cry burst the silence in which they moved, and the traveller's steed started aside as some wretch, on whom the disease had broken forth, was dropped from the vehicle by the selfish inhumanity of his comrades and left to perish by the way. Hard by the gate a wagon paused, and a man with a mask

threw out its contents in a green slimy ditch that bordered the road. These were garments and robes of all kind and value, — the broidered mantle of the gallant, the hood and veil of my lady, and the rags of the peasant. While glancing at the labor of the masker, the cavalier beheld a herd of swine, gaunt and half famished, run to the spot, in the hopes of food; and the traveller shuddered to think *what* food they might have anticipated! But ere he reached the gate, those of the animals that had been busiest rooting at the infectious heap dropped down dead amongst their fellows.¹

"Ho, ho," said the masker, — and his hollow voice sounded yet more hollow through his vizard, — "comest thou here to die, stranger? See, thy brave mantle of triple-pile and golden broidery will not save thee from the *gavocciolo*.² Ride on, ride on, — to-day fit morsel for thy lady's kiss; to-morrow too foul for the rat and worm!"

Replying not to this hideous welcome, Adrian, for it was he, pursued his way. The gates stood wide open: this was the most appalling sign of all; for at first the most jealous precaution had been taken against the ingress of strangers. Now all care, all foresight, all vigilance, were vain. And thrice nine warders had died at that single post, and the officers to appoint their successors were dead too! Law and Police, and the Tribunals of Health, and the Boards of Safety, Death had stopped them all! And the Plague killed art itself, social union, the harmony and mechanism of civilization, as if they had been bone and flesh!

So, mute and solitary, went on the lover in his quest of love, resolved to find and to save his betrothed, and guided (that faithful and loyal knight!) through the Wilderness of Horror by the blessed hope of that strange passion, noblest of all when noble, basest of all when base! He came into a broad and spacious square lined with palaces, — the usual haunt of the best and most graceful nobility of Italy. The stranger was alone now, and the tramp of his gallant steed sounded ghastly and fearful in his own ears, when just as he turned

¹ The same spectacle greeted, and is recorded by, Boccaccio.

² The tumor that made the fatal symptom.

the corner of one of the streets that led from it, he saw a woman steal forth with a child in her arms, while another, yet in infancy, clung to her robe. She held a large bunch of flowers to her nostrils (the fancied and favorite mode to prevent infection), and muttered to the children, who were moaning with hunger: "Yes, yes, you shall have food! Plenty of food now for the stirring forth. But oh, *that stirring forth!*" and she peered about and round, lest any of the diseased might be near.

"My friend," said he, "can you direct me to the convent of —"

"Away, man, away!" shrieked the woman.

"Alas!" said Adrian, with a mournful smile, "can you not see that I am not, as yet, one to *spread* contagion?"

But the woman, unheeding him, fled on; when, after a few paces, she was arrested by the child that clung to her.

"Mother, mother!" it cried, "I am sick, I cannot stir."

The woman halted, tore aside the child's robe, saw under the arm the fatal tumor, and, deserting her own flesh, fled with a shriek along the square. The shriek rang long in Adrian's ears, though not aware of the unnatural cause, — the *mother feared not for her infant, but herself*. The voice of Nature was no more heeded in that charnel city than it is in the tomb itself! Adrian rode on at a brisker pace, and came at length before a stately church; its doors were wide open, and he saw within a company of monks (the church had no other worshippers, and they were masked) gathered round the altar and chanting the *Miserere Domine*: the ministers of God, in a city hitherto boasting the devoutest population in Italy, without a flock!

The young Cavalier paused before the door and waited till the service was done, and the monks descended the steps into the street.

"Holy fathers," said he then, "may I pray your goodness to tell me my nearest way to the convent Santa Maria de' Pazzi?"

"Son," said one of these featureless spectres, — for so they seemed, in their shroud-like robes and uncouth vizards, —

"son, pass on your way, and God be with you! Robbers or revellers may now fill the holy cloisters you speak of. The abbess is dead, and many a sister sleeps with her; and the nuns have fled from the contagion."

Adrian half fell from his horse, and as he still remained rooted to the spot, the dark procession swept on, hymning in solemn dirge through the desolate street the monastic chant, —

"By the Mother and the Son,
Death endured and mercy won,
Spare us, sinners though we be, —
Miserere Domine!"

Recovering from his stupor, Adrian regained the brethren, and, as they closed the burden of their song, again accosted them, —

"Holy fathers, dismiss me not thus! Perchance the one I seek may yet be heard of at the convent. Tell me which way to shape my course."

"Disturb us not, son," said the monk who spoke before. "It is an ill omen for thee to break thus upon the invocations of the ministers of Heaven."

"Pardon, pardon! I will do ample penance, pay many masses; but I seek a dear friend, — the way, the way —"

"To the right, till you gain the first bridge. Beyond the third bridge, on the river side, you will find the convent," said another monk, moved by the earnestness of Adrian.

"Bless you, holy father!" faltered forth the Cavalier, and spurred his steed in the direction given. The friars heeded him not, but again resumed their dirge. Mingled with the sound of his horse's hoofs on the clattering pavement, came to the rider's ear the imploring line, —

"*Miserere Domine!*"

Impatient, sick at heart, desperate, Adrian flew through the street at the full speed of his horse. He passed the market-place, — it was empty as the desert, — the gloomy and barricaded streets in which the counter-cries of Guelf and Ghibeline had so often cheered on the chivalry and rank of Florence.

Now huddled together in vault and pit lay Gueff and Ghibeline, knightly spurs and beggar's crutch. To that silence the roar even of civil strife would have been a blessing! The first bridge, the river side, the second, the third bridge, all were gained, and Adrian at last reined his steed before the walls of the convent. He fastened his steed to the porch, in which the door stood ajar, half torn from its hinges, traversed the court, gained the opposite door that admitted to the main building, came to the jealous grating, now no more a barrier from the profane world, and as he there paused a moment to recover breath and nerve, wild laughter and loud song, interrupted and mixed with oaths, startled his ear. He pushed aside the grated door, entered, and, led by the sounds, came to the refectory. In that meeting-place of the severe and mortified maids of Heaven he now beheld gathered round the upper table, used of yore by the abbess, a strange, disorderly, ruffian herd, who at first glance seemed indeed of all ranks, for some wore serge, or even rags, others were tricked out in all the bravery of satin and velvet, plume and mantle. But a second glance sufficed to indicate that the companions were much of the same degree, and that the finery of the more showy was but the spoil rent from unguarded palaces or tenantless bazaars; for under plumed hats, looped with jewels, were grim, unwashed, unshaven faces, over which hung the long locks which the professed brethren of the sharp knife and hireling arm had just begun to assume, serving them often instead of a mask. Amidst these savage revellers were many women, young and middle-aged, foul and fair; and Adrian piously shuddered to see amongst the loose robes and uncovered necks of the professional harlots the saintly habit and beaded rosary of nuns. Flasks of wine, ample viands, gold and silver vessels, mostly consecrated to holy rites, strewed the board. As the young Roman paused, spell-bound, at the threshold, the man who acted as president of the revel, a huge, swarthy ruffian, with a deep scar over his face, which, traversing the whole of the left cheek and upper lip, gave his large features an aspect preternaturally hideous, called out to him, —

“Come in, man, come in! Why stand you there amazed

and dumb? We are hospitable revellers, and give all men welcome. Here are wine and women, — my Lord Bishop's wine, and my Lady Abbess's women !

“Sing hey ! sing ho ! for the royal DEATH,
That scatters a host with a single breath ;
That opens the prison to spoil the palace,
And rids honest necks from the hangman's malice.
Here's a health to the Plague ! Let the mighty ones dread :
The poor never liv'd till the wealthy were dead.
A health to the Plague ! may she ever, as now,
Loose the rogue from his chain, and the nun from her vow.
To the jailer a sword, to the captive a key,
Hurrah for Earth's Curse, 't is a blessing to me !”

Ere this fearful stave was concluded, Adrian, sensible that in such orgies there was no chance of prosecuting his inquiries, left the desecrated chamber and fled, scarcely drawing breath, so great was the terror that seized him, till he stood once more in the court amidst the hot, sickly, stagnant sunlight that seemed a fit atmosphere for the scenes on which it fell. He resolved, however, not to desert the place without making another effort of inquiry ; and while he stood without the court, musing and doubtful, he saw a small chapel hard by, through whose long casement gleamed faintly, and dimmed by the noon-day, the light of tapers. He turned towards its porch, entered, and saw beside the sanctuary a single nun kneeling in prayer. In the narrow aisle, upon a long table (at either end of which burned the tall dismal tapers whose rays had attracted him), the drapery of several shrouds showed him the half-distinct outline of human figures hushed in death. Adrian himself, impressed by the sadness and sanctity of the place, and the touching sight of that solitary and unselfish watcher of the dead, knelt down and intensely prayed.

As he rose, somewhat relieved from the burden at his heart, the nun rose also, and started to perceive him.

“Unhappy man !” said she, in a voice which, low, faint, and solemn, sounded as a ghost's, “what fatality brings thee hither ? Seest thou not thou art in the presence of clay which the Plague hath touched, — thou breathest the air which destroys ?

Hence! and search throughout all the desolation for one spot where the Dark Visitor hath not come!"

"Holy maiden," answered Adrian, "the danger you hazard does not appal me; I seek one whose life is dearer than my own."

"Thou needest say no more to tell me thou art newly come to Florence! Here son forsakes his father, and mother deserts her child. When life is most hopeless, these worms of a day cling to it as if it were the salvation of immortality! But for me alone death has no horror. Long severed from the world, I have seen my sisterhood perish, the house of God desecrated, its altar overthrown, and I care not to survive, — the last whom the Pestilence leaves at once unperjured and alive."

The nun paused a few moments, and then, looking earnestly at the healthful countenance and unbroken frame of Adrian, sighed heavily. "Stranger, why fly you not?" she said. "Thou mightest as well search the crowded vaults and rotten corruption of the dead, as search the city for one living."

"Sister and bride of the blessed Redeemer!" returned the Roman, clasping his hands, "one word I implore thee. Thou art, methinks, of the sisterhood of yon dismantled convent: tell me, knowest thou if Irene di Gabrini¹ — guest of the late Abbess, sister of the fallen Tribune of Rome — be yet amongst the living?"

"Art thou her brother, then?" said the nun. "Art thou that fallen Sun of the Morning?"

"I am her betrothed," replied Adrian, sadly. "Speak."

"O flesh! flesh! how art thou victor to the last, even amidst the triumphs and in the lazar-house of corruption!" said the nun. "Vain man, think not of such carnal ties; make thy peace with Heaven, for thy days are surely numbered!"

"Woman," cried Adrian, impatiently, "talk not to me of myself, nor rail against ties whose holiness thou canst not know! I ask thee again, as thou thyself hopest for mercy and for pardon, is Irene living?"

The nun was awed by the energy of the young lover, and

¹ The family name of Rienzi was Gabrini.

after a moment, which seemed to him an age of agonized suspense, she replied, —

“The maiden thou speakest of died not with the general death. In the dispersion of the few remaining she left the convent, I know not whither; but she had friends in Florence: their names I cannot tell thee.”

“Now bless thee, holy sister! bless thee! How long since she left the convent?”

“Four days have passed since the robber and the harlot have seized the house of Santa Maria,” replied the nun, groaning; “and they were quick successors to the sisterhood.”

“Four days! And thou canst give me no clew?”

“None, — yet stay, young man!” and the nun, approaching, lowered her voice to a hissing whisper: “Ask the *Becchini*.”¹

Adrian started aside, crossed himself hastily, and quitted the convent without answer. He returned to his horse, and rode back into the silenced heart of the city. Tavern and hotel there were no more; but the palaces of dead princes were free to the living stranger. He entered one, — a spacious and splendid mansion. In the stables he found forage still in the manger; but the horses — at that time in the Italian cities a proof of rank as well as wealth — were gone, with the hands that fed them. The high-born Knight assumed the office of groom, took off the heavy harness, fastened his steed to the rack, and as the wearied animal, unconscious of the surrounding horrors, fell eagerly upon its meal, its young lord turned away and muttered: “Faithful servant and sole companion! may the Pestilence, that spareth neither beast nor man, spare thee, and mayst thou bear me hence with a lighter heart!”

A spacious hall hung with arms and banners, a wide flight of marble stairs, whose walls were painted in the stiff outlines and gorgeous colors of the day, conducted to vast chambers hung with velvets and cloth of gold, but silent as the tomb.

¹ According to the usual custom of Florence, the dead were borne to their resting-place on biers, supported by citizens of equal rank; but a new trade was created by the Plague, and men of the lowest dregs of the populace, bribed by immense payment, discharged the office of transporting the remains of the victims. These were called *Becchini*.

He threw himself upon the cushions which were piled in the centre of the room, for he had ridden far that morning and for many days before, and he was wearied and exhausted, body and limb; but he could not rest. Impatience, anxiety, hope, and fear gnawed his heart and fevered his veins, and after a brief and unsatisfactory attempt to sober his own thoughts and devise some plan of search more certain than that which chance might afford him, he rose and traversed the apartments, in the unacknowledged hope which chance alone could suggest.

It was easy to see that he had made his resting-place in the home of one of the princes of the land; and the splendor of all around him far outshone the barbarous and rude magnificence of the less civilized and wealthy Romans. Here lay the lute as last touched, the gilded and illumined volume as last conned; there were seats drawn familiarly together, as when lady and gallant had interchanged whispers last.

"And such," thought Adrian, "such desolation may soon swallow up the vestige of the unwelcomed guest, as of the vanished lord!"

At length he entered a saloon, in which was a table still spread with wine-flasks, goblets of glass and one of silver, withered flowers, half-mouldy fruits, and viands. At one side the arras, folding-doors opened to a broad flight of stairs that descended to a little garden at the back of the house, in which a fountain still played sparkling and livingly, — the only thing, save the stranger, living there! On the steps lay a crimson mantle, and by it a lady's glove. The relics seemed to speak to the lover's heart of a lover's last wooing and last farewell. He groaned aloud, and feeling he should have need of all his strength, filled one of the goblets from a half-emptied flask of Cyprus wine. He drained the draught; it revived him. "Now," he said, "once more to my task! I will sally forth," when suddenly he heard heavy steps along the rooms he had quitted. They approached, they entered; and Adrian beheld two huge and ill-omened forms stalk into the chamber. They were wrapped in black, homely draperies, their arms were bare, and they wore large shapeless masks, which descended to the breast, leaving only access to sight and breath in three small

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and circular apertures. The Colonna half drew his sword, for the forms and aspects of these visitors were not such as men think to look upon in safety.

"Oh!" said one, "the palace has a new guest to-day. Fear us not, stranger; there is room, — ay, and wealth enough for all men now in Florence! *Per Bacco!* but there is still one goblet of silver left: how comes that?" So saying, the man seized the cup which Adrian had just drained, and thrust it into his breast. He then turned to Adrian, whose hand was still upon his hilt, and said, with a laugh which came choked and muffled through his vizard: "Oh! we cut no throats, Signor; the Invisible spares us that trouble. We are honest men, state officers, and come but to see if the cart should halt here to-night."

"Ye are then —"

"Becchini!"

Adrian's blood ran cold. The Becchino continued: "And keep you this house while you rest at Florence, Signor?"

"Yes, if the rightful lord claim it not."

"Ha! ha! 'Rightful lord!' The Plague is lord of all now! Why, I have known three gallant companies tenant this palace the last week, and have buried them all — all! It is a pleasant house enough, and gives good custom. Are you alone?"

"At present, yes."

"Show us where you sleep, that we may know where to come for you. You won't want us these three days, I see."

"Ye are pleasant welcomers!" said Adrian; "but listen to me. Can ye find the living as well as bury the dead? I seek one in this city who, if you discover her, shall be worth to you a year of burials."

"No, no! that is out of our line. As well look for a dropped sand on the beach as for a living being amongst closed houses and yawning vaults; but if you will pay the poor gravediggers beforehand, I promise you, you shall have the first of a new charnel-house, — it will be finished just about your time."

"There," said Adrian, flinging the wretches a few pieces of gold, "there! and if you would do me a kinder service,

leave me, at least while living; or I may save you that trouble." And he turned from the room.

The Becchino who had been spokesman followed him. "You are generous, Signor, stay: you will want fresher food than these filthy fragments. I will supply thee of the best while — while thou wantest it. And hark! whom wishest thou that I should seek?"

This question arrested Adrian's departure. He detailed the name and all the particulars he could suggest of Irene, and with sickened heart described the hair, features, and stature of that lovely and hallowed image, which might furnish a theme to the poet, and now gave a clew to the gravedigger.

The unhallowed apparition shook his head when Adrian had concluded. "Full five hundred such descriptions did I hear in the first days of the Plague, when there were still such things as mistress and lover; but it is a dainty catalogue, Signor, and it will be a pride to the poor Becchino to discover or even to bury so many charms! I will do my best; meanwhile I can recommend you, if in a hurry, to make the best of your time, to many a pretty face and comely shape —"

"Out, fiend!" muttered Adrian; "fool to waste time with such as thou!"

The laugh of the gravedigger followed his steps.

All that day did Adrian wander through the city; but search and question were alike unavailing. All whom he encountered and interrogated seemed to regard him as a madman, and these were indeed of no kind likely to advance his object. Wild troops of disordered, drunken revellers, processions of monks, or, here and there, scattered individuals gliding rapidly along, and shunning all approach or speech, made the only haunters of the dismal streets, till the sun sank, lurid and yellow, behind the hills, and darkness closed around the noiseless pathway of the Pestilence.

CHAPTER III.

FLOWERS AMIDST THE TOMBS.

ADRIAN found that the Becchino had taken care that famine should not forestall the Plague; the banquet of the dead was removed, and fresh viands and wines of all kinds — for there was plenty then in Florence! — spread the table. He partook of the refreshment, though but sparingly; and shrinking from repose in beds beneath whose gorgeous hangings Death had been so lately busy, carefully closed door and window, wrapped himself in his mantle, and found his resting-place on the cushions of the chamber in which he had supped. Fatigue cast him into an unquiet slumber, from which he was suddenly awakened by the roll of a cart below, and the jingle of bells. He listened, as the cart proceeded slowly from door to door, and at length its sound died away in the distance. He slept no more that night!

The sun had not long risen ere he renewed his labors; and it was yet early when, just as he passed a church, two ladies richly dressed came from the porch, and seemed through their vizards to regard the young Cavalier with earnest attention. The gaze arrested him also, when one of the ladies said, "Fair sir, you are over-bold: you wear no mask, neither do you smell to flowers."

"Lady, I wear no mask, for I would be seen; I search these miserable places for one in whose life I live."

"He is young, comely, evidently noble, and the Plague hath not touched him: he will serve our purpose well," whispered one of the ladies to the other.

"You echo my own thoughts," returned her companion; and then, turning to Adrian, she said, "You seek one you are not wedded to, if you seek so fondly."

"It is true."

"Young and fair, with dark hair and neck of snow : I will conduct you to her."

"Signora !"

"Follow us !"

"Know you who I am, and whom I seek ?"

"Yes."

"Can you in truth tell me aught of Irene ?"

"I can ; follow me."

"To her ?"

"Yes, yes ; follow us !"

The ladies moved on, as if impatient of further parley. Amazed, doubtful, and as if in a dream, Adrian followed them. Their dress, manner, and the pure Tuscan of the one who had addressed him, indicated them of birth and station ; but all else was a riddle which he could not solve.

They arrived at one of the bridges, where a litter and a servant on horseback, holding a palfrey by the bridle, were in attendance. The ladies entered the litter, and she who had before spoken, bade Adrian follow on the palfrey.

"But tell me —" he began.

"No questions, Cavalier," said she, impatiently ; "follow the living in silence, or remain with the dead, as you list."

With that the litter proceeded ; and Adrian mounted the palfrey wonderingly, and followed his strange conductors, who moved on at a tolerably brisk pace. They crossed the bridge, left the river on one side, and, soon ascending a gentle acclivity, the trees and flowers of the country began to succeed dull walls and empty streets. After proceeding thus somewhat less than half an hour, they turned up a green lane remote from the road, and came suddenly upon the porticos of a fair and stately palace. Here the ladies descended from their litter ; and Adrian, who had vainly sought to extract speech from the attendant, also dismounted, and following them across a spacious court, filled on either side with vases of flowers and orange-trees, and then through a wide hall in the farther side of the quadrangle, found himself in one of the loveliest spots eye ever saw or poet ever sang. It was a garden plot of the most emerald verdure. Bouquets of laurel and of

myrtle opened on either side into vistas half overhung with clematis and rose, through whose arcades the prospect closed with statues and gushing fountains; in front, the lawn was bounded by rows of vases on marble pedestals filled with flowers; and broad and gradual flights of steps of the whitest marble led from terrace to terrace, each adorned with statues and fountains, half way down a high but softly sloping and verdant hill. Beyond, spread in wide, various, and luxurious landscape the vineyards and olive-groves, the villas and villages, of the Vale of Arno, intersected by the silver river, while the city, in all its calm, but without its horror, raised its roofs and spires to the sun. Birds of every hue and song, some free, some in network of golden wire, warbled round; and upon the centre of the sward reclined four ladies, unmasked and richly dressed, the eldest of whom seemed scarcely more than twenty, and five cavaliers, young and handsome, whose jewelled vests and golden chains attested their degree. Wines and fruits were on a low table beside; and musical instruments, chess-boards, and gammon-tables lay scattered all about. So fair a group and so graceful a scene, Adrian never beheld but once, and that was in the midst of the ghastly pestilence of Italy; such group and such scene our closet indolence may yet revive in the pages of the bright Boccaccio!

On seeing Adrian and his companions approach, the party rose instantly; and one of the ladies, who wore upon her head a wreath of laurel-leaves, stepping before the rest, exclaimed: "Well done, my Mariana! Welcome back, my fair subjects. And you, sir, welcome hither."

The two guides of the Colonna had by this time removed their masks; and the one who had accosted him, shaking her long and raven ringlets over a bright, laughing eye and a cheek to whose native olive now rose a slight blush, turned to him ere he could reply to the welcome he had received.

"Signor Cavalier," said she, "you now see to what I have decoyed you. Own that this is pleasanter than the sights and sounds of the city we have left. You gaze on me in surprise. See, my Queen, how speechless the marvel of your court has

made our new gallant; I assure you he could talk quickly enough when he had only us to confer with, — nay, I was forced to impose silence on him.”

“Oh! then you have not yet informed him of the custom and origin of the court he enters?” quoth she of the laurel-wreath.

“No, my Queen; I thought all description given in such a spot as our poor Florence now is, would fail of its object. My task is done; I resign him to your Grace!”

So saying, the lady tripped lightly away, and began coquetishly sleeking her locks in the smooth mirror of a marble basin, whose waters trickled over the margin upon the grass below, ever and anon glancing archly towards the stranger, and sufficiently at hand to overhear all that was said.

“In the first place, Signor, permit us to inquire,” said the lady who bore the appellation of Queen, “thy name, rank, and birthplace.”

“Madam,” returned Adrian, “I came hither little dreaming to answer questions respecting myself; but what it pleases you to ask, it must please me to reply to. My name is Adrian di Castello, one of the Roman house of the Colonna.”

“A noble column of a noble house!” answered the Queen. “For us, respecting whom your curiosity may perhaps be aroused, know that we six ladies of Florence, deserted by or deprived of our kin and protectors, formed the resolution to retire to this palace, where, if death comes, it comes stripped of half its horrors; and as the learned tell us that sadness engenders the awful malady, so you see us sworn foes to sadness. Six cavaliers of our acquaintance agreed to join us. We pass our days, whether many or few, in whatever diversions we can find or invent. Music and the dance, merry tales and lively songs, with such slight change of scene as from sward to shade, from alley to fountain, fill up our time and prepare us for peaceful sleep and happy dreams. Each lady is by turns Queen of our fairy court, as is my lot this day. One law forms the code of our constitution, — that nothing sad shall be admitted. We would live as if yonder city were not, and as if (added the fair Queen, with a slight sigh)

youth, grace, and beauty could endure forever. One of our knights madly left us for a day, promising to return; we have seen him no more: we will not guess what hath chanced to him. It became necessary to fill up his place; we drew lots who should seek his substitute; it fell upon the ladies who have—not, I trust, to your displeasure—brought you hither. Fair sir, my explanation is made.”

“Alas, lovely Queen,” said Adrian, wrestling strongly, but vainly, with the bitter disappointment he felt, “I cannot be one of your happy circle; I am in myself a violation of your law. I am filled with but one sad and anxious thought, to which all mirth would seem impiety. I am a seeker amongst the living and the dead for one being of whose fate I am uncertain: and it was only by the words that fell from my fair conductor that I have been decoyed hither from my mournful task. Suffer me, gracious lady, to return to Florence.”

The Queen looked in mute vexation towards the dark-eyed Mariana, who returned the glance by one equally expressive; and then suddenly stepping up to Adrian she said,—

“But, Signor, if I should still keep my promise, if I should be able to satisfy thee of the health and safety of—of Irene?”

“Irene?” echoed Adrian in surprise, forgetful at the moment that he had before revealed the name of her he sought—“Irene—Irene di Gabrini, sister of the once-renowned Rienzi?”

“The same,” replied Mariana, quickly; “I knew her, as I told you. Nay, Signor, I do not deceive thee. It is true that I cannot bring thee to her; but better as it is. She went away many days ago to one of the towns of Lombardy, which, they say, the Pestilence has not yet pierced. Now, noble sir, is not your heart lightened, and will you so soon be a deserter from the Court of Loveliness, and perhaps,” she added, with a soft look from her large dark eyes, “of Love?”

“Dare I, in truth, believe you, lady?” said Adrian, all delighted, yet still half doubting.

“Would I deceive a true lover, as methinks you are? Be assured. Nay, Queen, receive your subject.”

The Queen extended her hand to Adrian, and led him to the group that still stood on the grass at a little distance. They welcomed him as a brother, and soon forgave his abstracted courtesies, in compliment to his good mien and illustrious name.

The Queen clapped her hands, and the party again ranged themselves on the sward, each lady beside each gallant. "You, Mariana, if not fatigued," said the Queen, "shall take the lute and silence these noisy grasshoppers, which chirp about us with as much pretension as if they were nightingales. Sing, sweet subject, sing; and let it be the song our dear friend, Signor Visdomini,¹ made for a kind of inaugural anthem to such as we admitted to our court."

Mariana, who had reclined herself by the side of Adrian, took up the lute, and after a short prelude, sang the words thus imperfectly translated: —

THE SONG OF THE FLORENTINE LADY.

Enjoy the more the smiles of noon
If doubtful be the morrow;
And know the Fort of Life is soon
Betrayed to Death by Sorrow!

Death claims us all; then, Grief, away!
We'll own no meaner master;
The clouds that darken round the day
But bring the night the faster.

Love, feast, be merry while on earth, —
Such, Grave, should be thy moral!
Ev'n Death himself is friends with Mirth,
And veils the tomb with laurel.²

While gazing on the eyes I love,
New life to mine is given:
If joy the lot of saints above,
Joy fits us best for heaven.

¹ I know not if this be the same Visdomini who, three years afterwards, with one of the Medici, conducted so gallant a reinforcement to Scarperia, then besieged by Visconti d' Oleggio.

² At that time, in Italy, the laurel was frequently planted over the dead.

To this song, which was much applauded, succeeded those light and witty tales in which the Italian novelists furnished Voltaire and Marmontel with a model, — each, in his or her turn, taking up the discourse, and with an equal dexterity avoiding every lugubrious image or mournful reflection that might remind those graceful idlers of the vicinity of Death. At any other time the temper and accomplishments of the young Lord di Castello would have fitted him to enjoy and to shine in that Arcadian Court; but now he in vain sought to dispel the gloom from his brow, and the anxious thought from his heart. He revolved the intelligence he had received, wondered, guessed, hoped, and dreaded still; and if for a moment his mind returned to the scene about him, his nature, too truly poetical for the false sentiment of the place, asked itself in what, save the polished exterior and the graceful circumstance, the mirth that he now so reluctantly witnessed differed from the brutal revels in the convent of Santa Maria, — each alike in its motive, though so differing in the manner; equally callous and equally selfish, coining horror into enjoyment. The fair Mariana, whose partner had been reft from her, as the Queen had related, was in no mind to lose the new one she had gained. She pressed upon him from time to time the wine-flask and the fruits; and in those unmeaning courtesies her hand gently lingered upon his. At length the hour arrived when the companions retired to the Palace during the fiercer heats of noon, to come forth again in the declining sun, to sup by the side of the fountain, to dance, to sing, and to make merry by torch-light and the stars till the hour of rest. But Adrian, not willing to continue the entertainment, no sooner found himself in the apartment to which he was conducted than he resolved to effect a silent escape, as under all circumstances the shortest, and not perhaps the least courteous, farewell left to him. Accordingly, when all seemed quiet and hushed in the repose common to the inhabitants of the South during that hour, he left his apartment, descended the stairs, passed the outer court, and was already at the gate, when he heard himself called by a voice that spoke vexation and alarm. He turned to behold Mariana.

"Why, how now, Signor di Castello? Is our company so unpleasing, is our music so jarring, or are our brows so wrinkled that you should fly as the traveller flies from the witches he surprises at Benevento? Nay, you cannot mean to leave us yet?"

"Fair dame," returned the cavalier, somewhat disconcerted, "it is in vain that I seek to rally my mournful spirits, or to fit myself for the court to which nothing sad should come. Your laws hang about me like a culprit: better timely flight than harsh expulsion."

As he spoke he moved on, and would have passed the gate; but Mariana caught his arm.

"Nay," said she, softly, "are there no eyes of dark light, and no neck of wintry snow, that can compensate to thee for the absent one? Tarry and forget, as doubtless in absence even *thou* art forgotten!"

"Lady," answered Adrian, with great gravity, not unmixed with an ill-suppressed disdain, "I have not sojourned long enough amidst the sights and sounds of woe to blunt my heart and spirit into callousness to all around. Enjoy, if thou canst, and gather the rank roses of the sepulchre; but to me, haunted still by funeral images, Beauty fails to bring delight, and Love — even *holy* love — seems darkened by the Shadow of Death. Pardon me, and farewell!"

"Go, then," said the Florentine, stung and enraged at his coldness; "go, and find your mistress amidst the associations on which it pleases your philosophy to dwell. I did but deceive thee, blind fool, — as I had hoped for thine own good, — when I told thee Irene — was that her name? — was gone from Florence. Of her I know nought, and heard nought, save from thee. Go back and search the vault, and see whether thou lovest her still!"

CHAPTER IV.

WE OBTAIN WHAT WE SEEK, AND KNOW IT NOT.

IN the fiercest heat of the day, and on foot, Adrian returned to Florence. As he approached the city, all that festive and gallant scene he had quitted seemed to him like a dream, — a vision of the gardens and bowers of an enchantress, from which he woke abruptly as a criminal may wake on the morning of his doom to see the scaffold and the deathsman; so much did each silent and lonely step into the funereal city bring back his bewildered thoughts at once to life and to death. The parting words of Mariana sounded like a knell at his heart. And now as he passed on, — the heat of the day, the lurid atmosphere, long fatigue, alternate exhaustion and excitement, combining with the sickness of disappointment, the fretting consciousness of precious moments irretrievably lost, and his utter despair of forming any systematic mode of search, — fever began rapidly to burn through his veins. His temples felt oppressed as with the weight of a mountain; his lips parched with intolerable thirst; his strength seemed suddenly to desert him; and it was with pain and labor that he dragged one languid limb after the other.

“I feel it,” thought he, with the loathing nausea and shivering dread with which Nature struggles ever against death, “I feel it upon me, — the Devouring and the Viewless; I shall perish, and without saving her; nor shall even one grave contain us!”

But these thoughts served rapidly to augment the disease which began to pray upon him; and ere he reached the interior of the city, even thought itself forsook him. The images of men and houses grew indistinct and shadowy before his eyes; the burning pavement became unsteady and reeling beneath his feet; delirium gathered over him, and he went on his way muttering broken and incoherent words; the few who met fled

from him in dismay. Even the monks, still continuing their solemn and sad processions, passed with a murmured *bene vobis* to the other side from that on which his steps swerved and faltered. And from a booth at the corner of a street, four Becchini, drinking together, fixed upon him from their black masks the gaze that vultures fix upon some dying wanderer of the desert. Still he crept on, stretching out his arms like a man in the dark, and seeking, with the vague sense that yet struggled against the gathering delirium, to find out the mansion in which he had fixed his home; though many as fair to live, and as meet to die in, stood with open portals before and beside his path.

"Irene, Irene!" he cried, sometimes in a muttered and low tone, sometimes in a wild and piercing shriek, "where art thou? Where? I come to snatch thee from them; they shall not have thee, the foul and ugly fiends! Pah! how the air smells of dead flesh! Irene, Irene! we will away to mine own palace and the heavenly lake — Irene!"

While thus benighted, and thus exclaiming, two females suddenly emerged from a neighboring house, masked and mantled.

"Vain wisdom!" said the taller and slighter of the two, whose mantle, it is here necessary to observe, was of a deep blue, richly brodered with silver, of a shape and a color not common in Florence, but usual in Rome, where the dress of ladies of the higher rank was singularly bright in hue and ample in fold, — thus differing from the simpler and more slender draperies of the Tuscan fashion, — "Vain wisdom, to fly a relentless and certain doom!"

"Why, thou wouldst not have us hold the same home with three of the dead in the next chamber, — strangers too to us, — when Florence has so many empty halls? Trust me, we shall not walk far ere we suit ourselves with a safer lodgment."

"Hitherto, indeed, we have been miraculously preserved," sighed the other, whose voice and shape were those of extreme youth; "yet would that we knew where to fly, — what mount, what wood, what cavern, held my brother and his faithful Nina! I am sick with horrors!"

"Irene, Irene! Well, then, if thou art at Milan or some Lombard town, why do I linger here? To horse, to horse! Oh, no! no! — not the horse with the bells; not the death-cart!"

With a cry, a shriek, louder than the loudest of the sick man's, broke that young female away from her companion. It seemed as if a single step took her to the side of Adrian. She caught his arm, she looked in his face, she met his unconscious eyes, bright with a fearful fire. "It has seized him," she then said, in a deep but calmer tone — "the Plague!"

"Away, away! Are you mad?" cried her companion. "Hence, hence! Touch me not, now thou hast touched him! Go! Here we part!"

"Help me to bear him somewhere! See, he faints, he droops, he falls! Help me, dear Signora, for pity, for the love of God!"

But wholly possessed by the selfish fear which overcame all humanity in that miserable time, the elder woman, though naturally kind, pitiful, and benevolent, fled rapidly away, and soon vanished. Thus left alone with Adrian, who had now, in the fierceness of the fever that preyed within him, fallen on the ground, the strength and nerve of that young girl did not forsake her. She tore off the heavy mantle which encumbered her arms and cast it from her; and then, lifting up the face of her lover, — for who but Irene was that weak woman, thus shrinking not from the contagion of death? — she supported him on her breast, and called aloud and again for help. At length the Becchini in the booth before noticed (hardened in their profession, and who, thus hardened, better than the most cautious escaped the pestilence) lazily approached. "Quicker, quicker, for Christ's love!" said Irene. "I have much gold, — I will reward you well; help me to bear him under the nearest roof."

"Leave him to us, young lady; we have had our eye upon him," said one of the gravediggers. "We'll do our duty by him, first and last."

"No, no! touch not his head, — that is my care. There, I will help you; so, — now then; but be gentle!"

Assisted by these portentous officers, Irene — who would not release her hold, but seemed to watch over the beloved eyes and lips, set and closed as they were, as if to look back the soul from parting — bore Adrian into a neighboring house and laid him on a bed, from which Irene (preserving, as only women do in such time, the presence of mind and vigilant providence which make so sublime a contrast with their keen susceptibilities) caused them first to cast off the draperies and clothing, which might retain additional infection. She then despatched them for new furniture and for whatsoever leech money might yet bribe to a duty, now chiefly abandoned to those heroic Brotherhoods who, however vilified in modern judgment by the crimes of some unworthy members, were yet, in the dark times, the best, the bravest, and the holiest agents to whom God ever delegated the power to resist the oppressor, to feed the hungry, to minister to woe; and who, alone amidst that fiery Pestilence (loosed, as it were, a demon from the abyss, to shiver into atoms all that binds the world to Virtue and to Law) seemed to awaken, as by the sound of an angel's trumpet, to that noblest Chivalry of the Cross, whose faith is the scorn of self, whose hope is beyond the lazar-house, whose feet, already winged for immortality, trample, with a conqueror's march, upon the graves of Death!

While this the ministry and the office of love, along that street in which Adrian and Irene had met at last, came singing, reeling, roaring, the dissolute and abandoned crew who had fixed their quarters in the Convent of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, their bravo chief at their head, and a nun (no longer in nun's garments) upon either arm. "A health to the Plague!" shouted the ruffian. "A health to the Plague!" echoed his frantic Bacchanals.

"A health to the Plague! may she ever, as now,
Loose the rogue from his chain and the nun from her vow!
To the jailer a sword, to the captive a key,
Hurrah for Earth's Curse! 't is a blessing to me."

"Holla!" cried the chief, stopping, "here, Margherita, here's a brave cloak for thee, my girl; silver enow on it to fill thy purse, if it ever grow empty, — which it may, if ever the Plague grow slack."

"Nay," said the girl, who amidst all the havoc of debauch, retained much of youth and beauty in her form and face, "nay, Guidotto; perhaps it has infection."

"Pooh, child, silver never infects! Clap it on, clap it on. Besides, fate is fate, and when it is thine hour there will be other means besides the *gavocciolo*."

So saying, he seized the mantle, threw it roughly over her shoulders, and dragged her on as before, half pleased with the finery, half frightened with the danger; while gradually died away, along the lurid air and the mournful streets, the chant of that most miserable mirth.

CHAPTER V.

THE ERROR.

For three days — the fatal three days — did Adrian remain bereft of strength and sense. But he was not smitten by the scourge which his devoted and generous nurse had anticipated. It was a fierce and dangerous fever, brought on by the great fatigue, restlessness, and terrible agitation he had undergone.

No professional mediciner could be found to attend him, but a good friar — better, perhaps, skilled in the healing art than many who claimed its monopoly — visited him daily. And in the long and frequent absences to which his other and numerous duties compelled the monk, there was one ever at hand to smooth the pillow, to wipe the brow, to listen to the moan, to watch the sleep. And even in that dismal office, when, in the frenzy of the sufferer, her name, coupled with terms of passionate endearment, broke from his lips, a thrill of strange pleasure crossed the heart of the betrothed, which she chid as if it were a crime. But even the most unearthly love is selfish in the rapture of being loved! Words cannot tell, heart cannot divine, the mingled emotions that broke over her when, in some of those incoherent ravings, she dimly understood that *for her* the

city had been sought, the death dared, the danger incurred. And as then, bending passionately to kiss that burning brow, her tears fell fast over the idol of her youth, the fountains from which they gushed were those, fathomless and countless, which a life could not weep away. Not an impulse of the human and the woman heart that was not stirred; the adoring gratitude, the meek wonder thus to *be* loved, while deeming it so simple a merit thus to love, — as if all sacrifice *in* her were a thing of course, *to* her a virtue Nature could not paragon, words could not repay! And there he lay, — the victim to his own fearless faith, helpless, dependent upon her, a thing, between life and death, to thank, to serve, to be proud of yet protect, to compassionate yet revere, the saver, to be saved! Never seemed one object to demand at once from a single heart so many and so profound emotions, — the romantic enthusiasm of the girl, the fond idolatry of the bride, the watchful providence of the mother over her child.

And strange to say, with all the excitement of that lonely watch, scarcely stirring from his side, taking food only that her strength might not fail her, unable to close her eyes, though, from the same cause, she would fain have taken rest when slumber fell upon her charge, — with all such wear and tear of frame and heart, she seemed wonderfully supported. And the holy man marvelled, in each visit, to see the cheek of the nurse still fresh, and her eye still bright. In her own superstition she thought and felt that Heaven gifted her with a preternatural power to be true to so sacred a charge; and in this fancy she did not wholly err, — for Heaven *did* gift her with that diviner power, when it planted in so soft a heart the enduring might and energy of Affection! The friar had visited the sick man late on the third night, and administered to him a strong sedative. “This night,” said he to Irene, “will be the crisis: should he awaken, as I trust he may, with a returning consciousness and a calm pulse, he will live; if not, young daughter, prepare for the worst. But should you note any turn in the disease that may excite alarm or require my attendance, this scroll will inform you where I am, if God spare me still, at each hour of the night and morning.”

The monk retired, and Irene resumed her watch.

The sleep of Adrian was at first broken and interrupted; his features, his exclamations, his gestures, all evinced great agony, whether mental or bodily, —it seemed, as perhaps it was, a fierce and doubtful struggle between life and death for the conquest of the sleeper. Patient, silent, breathing but by long-drawn gasps, Irene sat at the bed-head. The lamp was removed to the farther end of the chamber, and its ray, shaded by the draperies, did not suffice to give to her gaze more than the outline of the countenance she watched. In that awful suspense, all the thoughts that hitherto had stirred her mind lay hushed and mute. She was only sensible to that unutterable fear which few of us have been happy enough not to know, that crushing weight under which we can scarcely breathe or move, the avalanche over us, freezing and suspended, which we cannot escape from, beneath which, every moment, we may be buried and overwhelmed. The whole destiny of life was in the chances of that single night! It was just as Adrian at last seemed to glide into a deeper and serener slumber that the bells of the death-cart broke with their boding knell the palpable silence of the streets; now hushed, now revived, as the cart stopped for its gloomy passengers, and coming nearer and nearer after every pause. At length she heard the heavy wheels stop under the very casement, and a voice, deep and muffled, calling aloud, "Bring out the dead!" She rose, and with a noiseless step passed to secure the door, when the dull lamp gleamed upon the dark and shrouded forms of the Becchini.

"You have not marked the door, nor set out the body," said one gruffly, "but this is the *third night*! He is ready for us."

"Hush! he sleeps; away, quick, — it is not the Plague that seized him."

"Not the Plague?" growled the Becchino in a disappointed tone; "I thought no other illness dare encroach upon the rights of the *gavocciolo*!"

"Go, — here's money; leave us."

And the grisly carrier sullenly withdrew. The cart moved

on, the bell renewed its summons, till slowly and faintly the dreadful larum died in the distance.

Shading the lamp with her hand, Irene stole to the bedside, fearful that the sound and the intrusion had disturbed the slumberer. But his face was still locked, as in a vice, with that iron sleep. He stirred not, the breath scarcely passed his lips; she felt his pulse as the wan hand lay on the coverlet, — there was a slight beat. She was contented, removed the light, and retiring to a corner of the room, placed the little cross suspended round her neck up on the table, and prayed, in her intense suffering, to Him who had known death, and who — Son of Heaven though He was, and Sovereign of the Seraphim — had also prayed, in His earthly travail, that the cup might pass away.

The morning broke, not, as in the North, slowly and through shadow, but with the sudden glory with which in those climates day leaps upon earth, — like a giant from his sleep. A sudden smile, a burnished glow, and night had vanished. Adrian still slept; not a muscle seemed to have stirred; the sleep was even heavier than before; the silence became a burden upon the air. Now in that exceeding torpor so like unto death, the solitary watcher became alarmed and terrified. Time passed; morning glided to noon; still not a sound or motion. The sun was midway in Heaven: the friar came not. And now, again touching Adrian's pulse, she felt no flutter; she gazed on him, appalled and confounded: surely nought living could be so still and pale! "Was it indeed sleep, might it not be —" She turned away, sick and frozen; her tongue clove to her lips. Why did the Father tarry? She would go to him; she would learn the worst; she could forbear no longer. She glanced over the scroll the monk had left her. "From sunrise," it said, "I shall be at the convent of the Dominicans. Death has stricken many of the brethren." The convent was at some distance, but she knew the spot, and fear would wing her steps. She gave one wistful look at the sleeper, and rushed from the house. "I shall see thee again presently," she murmured. Alas! what hope can calculate beyond the moment? And who shall claim the tenure of "*The Again?*"

It was not many minutes after Irene had left the room ere,

with a long sigh, Adrian opened his eyes, an-altered and another man ; the fever was gone, the reviving pulse beat low, indeed, but calm. His mind was once more master of his body, and though weak and feeble, the danger was past, and life and intellect regained.

"I have slept long," he muttered ; "and oh, such dreams ! And methought I saw Irene, but could not speak to her, and while I attempted to grasp her, her face changed, her form dilated, and I was in the clutch of the foul gravedigger. It is late, the sun is high ; I must be up and stirring. Irene is in Lombardy. No, no, — that was a lie, a wicked lie ; she is at Florence ; I must renew my search."

As this duty came to his remembrance, he rose from the bed. He was amazed at his own debility : at first he could not stand without support from the wall ; by degrees, however, he so far regained the mastery of his limbs as to walk, though with effort and pain. A ravening hunger preyed upon him ; he found some scanty and light food in the chamber, which he devoured eagerly, and with scarce less eagerness laved his enfeebled form and haggard face with the water that stood at hand. He now felt refreshed and invigorated, and began to indue his garments, which he found thrown on a heap beside the bed. He gazed with surprise and a kind of self-compassion upon his emaciated hands and shrunken limbs, and began now to comprehend that he must have had some severe but unconscious illness. "Alone, too," thought he ; "no one here to tend me ! Nature my only nurse ! But alas ! alas ! how long a time may thus have been wasted, and my adored Irene — Quick, quick ! not a moment more will I lose."

He soon found himself in the open street ; the air revived him ; and that morning had sprung up the blessed breeze, — the first known for weeks. He wandered on, very slowly and feebly, till he came to a broad square, from which, in the vista, might be seen one of the principal gates of Florence, and the fig-trees and olive-groves beyond. It was then that a Pilgrim of tall stature approached towards him as from the gate ; his hood was thrown back, and gave to view a countenance of great but sad command, — a face in whose high features.

massive brow, and proud, unshrinking gaze, shaded by an expression of melancholy more stern than soft, Nature seemed to have written majesty and Fate disaster. As in that silent and dreary place, these two, the only tenants of the street, now encountered, Adrian stopped abruptly, and said, in a startled and doubting voice: "Do I dream still, or do I behold Rienzi?"

The Pilgrim paused also as he heard the name, and gazing long on the attenuated features of the young lord, said: "I am he that was Rienzi! And you, pale shadow, is it in this grave of Italy that I meet with the gay and high Colonna? Alas! young friend," he added, in a more relaxed and kindly voice, "hath the Plague not spared the flower of the Roman nobles? Come! I, the cruel and the harsh Tribune, *I* will be thy nurse; he who might have been my brother, shall yet claim from me a brother's care."

With these words, he wound his arm tenderly round Adrian; and the young noble, touched by his compassion, and agitated by the surprise, leaned upon Rienzi's breast in silence.

"Poor youth," resumed the Tribune, — for so, since rather fallen than deposed, he may yet be called, — "I ever loved the young (my brother died young), and you more than most. What fatality brought thee hither?"

"Irene!" replied Adrian, falteringly.

"Is it so really? Art thou a Colonna, and yet prize the fallen? The same duty has brought me also to the city of Death. From the farthest South; over the mountains of the robber; through the fastnesses of my foes; through towns in which the herald proclaimed in my ear the price of my head, — I have passed hither, on foot and alone, safe under the wings of the Almighty One. Young man, thou shouldst have left this task to one who bears a wizard's life, and whom Heaven and Earth yet reserve for an appointed end!"

The Tribune said this in a deep and inward voice; and in his raised eye and solemn brow might be seen how much his reverses had deepened his fanaticism, and added even to the sanguineness of his hopes.

"But," asked Adrian, withdrawing gently from Rienzi's arm,

"thou knowest, then, where Irene is to be found? Let us go together. Lose not a moment in this talk: time is of inestimable value; and a moment in this city is often but the border to eternity."

"Right!" said Rienzi, awakening to his object. "But fear not; I *have dreamed* that I shall save her, the gem and darling of my house. Fear not; *I have no fear.*"

"Know you where to seek?" said Adrian, impatiently; "the Convent holds far other guests."

"Ha! so said my dream!"

"Talk not now of dreams," said the lover; "but if you have no other guide, let us part at once in quest of her. I will take yonder street, you take the opposite; and at sunset let us meet in the same spot."

"Rash man!" said the Tribune, with great solemnity, "scoff not at the visions which Heaven makes a parable to its Chosen. Thou seekest counsel of thy human wisdom; I, less presumptuous, follow the hand of the mysterious Providence, moving even now before my gaze as a pillar of light through the wilderness of dread. Ay, meet me here at sunset, and prove whose guide is the most unerring. If my dream tell me true, I shall see my sister living, ere the sun reach yonder hill, and by a church dedicated to Saint Mark."

The grave earnestness with which Rienzi spoke, impressed Adrian with a hope which his reason would not acknowledge. He saw him depart with that proud and stately step to which his sweeping garments gave a yet more imposing dignity, and then passed up the street to the right hand. He had not got half way when he felt himself pulled by the mantle. He turned, and saw the shapeless mask of a Becchino.

"I feared you were sped, and that another had cheated me of my office," said the gravedigger, "seeing that you returned not to the old Prince's palace. You don't know me from the rest of us I see; but I am the one you told to seek —"

"Irene!"

"Yes, Irene di Gabrini; you promised ample reward."

"You shall have it."

"Follow me."

The Becchino strode on, and soon arrived at a mansion. He knocked twice at the porter's entrance; an old woman cautiously opened the door. "Fear not, good aunt," said the gravedigger; "this is the young lord I spoke to thee of. Thou sayest thou hadst two ladies in the palace, who alone survived of all the lodgers, and their names were Bianca de Medici and — What was the other?"

"Irene di Gabrini, a Roman lady. But I told thee this was the fourth day they left the house, terrified by the deaths within it."

"Thou didst so. And was there anything remarkable in the dress of the Signora di Gabrini?"

"Yes, I have told thee, — a blue mantle, such as I have rarely seen, wrought with silver."

"Was the broidery that of stars, — silver stars," exclaimed Adrian, "with a sun in the centre?"

"It was."

"Alas, alas! the arms of the Tribune's family! I remember how I praised the mantle the first day she wore it, — the day on which we were betrothed!" And the lover at once conjectured the secret sentiment which had induced Irene to retain thus carefully a robe so endeared by association.

"You know no more of your lodgers?"

"Nothing."

"And is this all you have learned, knave?" cried Adrian.

"Patience. I must bring you from proof to proof, and link to link, in order to win my reward. Follow, Signor."

The Becchino, then passing through the several lanes and streets, arrived at another house, of less magnificent size and architecture. Again he tapped thrice at the parlor door, and this time came forth a man, withered, old, and palsied, whom death seemed to disdain to strike.

"Signor Astuccio," said the Becchino, "pardon me; but I told thee I might trouble thee again. This is the gentleman who wants to know what is often best unknown, — but that's not my affair. Did a lady, young and beautiful, with dark hair and of a slender form, enter this house, stricken with the first symptom of the Plague, three days since?"

"Ay, thou knowest that well enough; and thou knowest, still better, that she has departed these two days: it was quick work with her — quicker than with most!"

"Did she wear anything remarkable?"

"Yes, troublesome man: a blue cloak, with stars of silver."

"Could thou guess aught of her previous circumstances?"

"No, save that she raved much about the nunnery of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, and bravos, and sacrilege."

"Are you satisfied, Signor?" asked the gravedigger, with an air of triumph, turning to Adrian. "But no; I will satisfy thee better, if thou hast courage. Wilt thou follow?"

"I comprehend thee; lead on. Courage! What is there on earth now to fear?"

Muttering to himself, "Ay, leave me alone. I have a head worth something; I ask no gentleman to go by my word; I will make his own eyes the judge of what my trouble is worth," the gravedigger now led the way through one of the gates a little out of the city. And here, under a shed, sat six of his ghastly and ill-omened brethren, with spades and pick-axes at their feet.

His guide now turned round to Adrian, whose face was set, and resolute in despair.

"Fair Signor," said he, with some touch of lingering compassion, "wouldst thou really convince thine own eyes and heart? The sight may appal, the contagion may destroy, thee, — if, indeed, as it seems to me, Death has not already written '*mine*' upon thee."

"Raven of bode and woe!" answered Adrian, "seest thou not that all I shrink from is thy voice and aspect? Show me her I seek, living or dead."

"I will show her to you, then," said the Becchino, sullenly, "such as two nights since she was committed to my charge. Line and lineament may already be swept away, for the Plague hath a rapid besom; but I have left that upon her by which you will know the Becchino is no liar. Bring hither the torches, comrades, and lift the door. Never stare; it's the gentleman's whim, and he'll pay it well."

Turning to the right, while Adrian mechanically followed

his conductors, a spectacle whose dire philosophy crushes as with a wheel all the pride of mortal man — the spectacle of that vault in which earth hides all that on earth flourished, rejoiced, exulted — awaited his eye!

The Becchini lifted a ponderous grate, lowered their torches (scarcely needed; for through the aperture rushed, with a hideous glare, the light of the burning sun), and motioned to Adrian to advance. He stood upon the summit of the abyss and gazed below.

It was a large, deep, and circular space, like the bottom of an exhausted well. In niches cut into the walls of earth around lay, duly coffined, those who had been the earliest victims of the Plague, when the Becchino's market was not yet glutted, and priest followed, and friend mourned the dead. But on the floor below, *there* was the loathsome horror! Huddled and matted together — some naked, some in shrouds already black and rotten — lay the later guests, the unshriven and unblest! The torches, the sun, streamed broad and red over Corruption in all its stages, from the pale blue tint and swollen shape, to the moistened undistinguishable mass, or the riddled bones, where yet clung, in strips and tatters, the black and mangled flesh. In many, the face remained almost perfect, while the rest of the body was but bone: the long hair, the human face, surmounting the grisly skeleton. There was the infant, still on the mother's breast; there was the lover, stretched across the dainty limbs of his adored! The rats (for they clustered in numbers to that feast), disturbed, not scared, sat up from their horrid meal as the light glimmered over them, and thousands of them lay round, stark and dead, poisoned by that they fed on! There, too, the wild satire of the gravediggers had cast, though stripped of their gold and jewels, the emblems that spoke of departed rank, — the broken wand of the Councillor; the General's *bâton*; the Priestly Mitre! The foul and livid exhalations gathered like flesh itself, fungous and putrid, upon the walls, and the¹ —

¹ The description in the text is borrowed from the famous waxwork model (of the interior of the Charnel-house) at Florence.

But who shall detail the ineffable and unimaginable horrors that reigned over the Palace where the Great King received the prisoners whom the sword of the Pestilence had subdued?

But through all that crowded court — crowded with beauty and with birth, with the strength of the young, and the honors of the old, and the valor of the brave, and the wisdom of the learned, and the wit of the scorner, and the piety of the faithful — one only figure attracted Adrian's eye. Apart from the rest, a late-comer, the long locks streaming far and dark over arm and breast, lay a female, the face turned partially aside, the little seen not recognizable even by the mother of the dead; but wrapped round in that fatal mantle, on which, though blackened and tarnished, was yet visible the starry heraldry assumed by those who claimed the name of the proud Tribune of Rome. Adrian saw no more, he fell back in the arms of the gravediggers; when he recovered, he was still without the gates of Florence, reclined upon a green mound. His guide stood beside him, holding his steed by the bridle as it grazed patiently on the neglected grass. The other brethren of the axe had resumed their seat under the shed.

"So, you have revived! Ah! I thought it was only the effluvia; few stand it as we do. And so, as your search is over, deeming you would now be quitting Florence if you have any sense left to you, I went for your good horse. I have fed him since your departure from the palace. Indeed I fancied he would be my perquisite; but there are plenty as good. Come, young sir, mount! I feel a pity for you, I know not why, except that you are the only one I have met for weeks who seems to care for another more than for yourself. I hope you are satisfied now that I showed some brains, eh! in your service; and as I have kept my promise, you'll keep yours."

"Friend," said Adrian, "here is gold enough to make thee rich. Here, too, is a jewel that merchants will tell thee princes might vie to purchase. Thou seemest honest, despite thy calling, or thou mightest have robbed and murdered me long since. Do me one favor more."

"By my poor mother's soul, yes."

"Take yon—yon clay from that fearful place. Inter it in some quiet and remote spot, apart, alone! You promise me; you swear it? It is well! And now help me on my horse. Farewell, Italy; and if I die not with this stroke, may I die as befits at once honor and despair,—with trumpet and banner round me, in a well-fought field against a worthy foe! Save a knightly death, nothing is left to live for!"

BOOK VII.

THE PRISON.

Fu rinchiuso in una torre grossa e larga ; avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 13.

He was immured in a high and spacious tower ; he had books enough, — his Titus Livius, his histories of Rome, the Bible, etc.

CHAPTER I.

AVIGNON. — THE TWO PAGES. — THE STRANGER BEAUTY.

THERE is this difference between the Drama of Shakspeare and that of almost every other master of the same art : that in the first, the catastrophe is rarely produced by one single cause, one simple and continuous chain of events. Various and complicated agencies work out the final end. Unfettered by the rules of time and place, each time, each place depicted, presents us with its appropriate change of action or of actors. Sometimes the interest seems to halt, to turn aside, to bring us unawares upon objects hitherto unnoticed, or upon qualities of the characters hitherto hinted at, not developed. But in reality, the pause in the action is but to collect, to gather up, and to grasp, all the varieties of circumstance that conduce to the Great Result ; and the art of fiction is only deserted for the fidelity of history. Whoever seeks to place before the world the true representation of a man's life and times, and enlarging the Dramatic into the Epic, extends his narrative over the vicissitudes of years, will find himself unconsciously, in this, the imitator of Shakspeare. New characters, each conducive to the end, new scenes, each leading to the last, rise

before him as he proceeds, sometimes seeming to the reader to delay, even while they advance, the dread catastrophe. The sacrificial procession sweeps along, swelled by new-comers, losing many that first joined it, before, at last, the same as a whole, but differing in its components, the crowd reaches the fated bourn of the Altar and the Victim !

It is five years after the date of the events I have recorded, and my story conveys us to the Papal Court at Avignon, — that tranquil seat of power to which the successors of Saint Peter had transplanted the luxury, the pomp, and the vices of the Imperial City. Secure from the fraud of violence of a powerful and barbarous nobility, the courtiers of the See surrendered themselves to a holiday of delight ; their repose was devoted to enjoyment, and Avignon presented at that day perhaps the gayest and most voluptuous society of Europe. The elegance of Clement VI. had diffused an air of literary refinement over the grosser pleasures of the place, and the spirit of Petrarch still continued to work its way through the councils of faction and the orgies of debauch.

Innocent VI. had lately succeeded Clement, and whatever his own claims to learning,¹ he at least appreciated knowledge and intellect in others ; so that the graceful pedantry of the time continued to mix itself with the pursuit of pleasure. The corruption which reigned through the whole place was too confirmed to yield to the example of Innocent, himself a man of simple habits and exemplary life. Though, like his predecessor, obedient to the policy of France, Innocent possessed a hard and an extended ambition. Deeply concerned for the interests of the Church, he formed the project of confirming and re-establishing her shaken dominion in Italy ; and he regarded the tyrants of the various states as the principal obstacles to his ecclesiastical ambition. Nor was this the policy of Innocent VI. alone. With such exceptions as peculiar circumstances necessarily occasioned, the Papal See was,

¹ Matteo Villani (lib. iii. cap. 44) says that Innocent VI. had not much pretension to learning. He is reported, however, by other authorities, cited by Zefrino Re, to have been "eccellente canonista." He had been a professor in the University of Toulouse.

upon the whole, friendly to the political liberties of Italy. The Republics of the Middle Ages grew up under the shadow of the Church; and there, as elsewhere, it was found, contrary to a vulgar opinion, that Religion, however prostituted and perverted, served for the general protection of civil freedom, — raised the lowly, and resisted the oppressor.

At this period there appeared at Avignon a lady of singular and matchless beauty. She had come with a slender but well-appointed retinue from Florence, but declared herself of Neapolitan birth, — the widow of a noble of the brilliant court of the unfortunate Jane. Her name was Cesarini. Arrived at a place where, even in the citadel of Christianity, Venus retained her ancient empire, where Love made the prime business of life, and to be beautiful was to be of power, — the Signora Cesarini had scarcely appeared in public before she saw at her feet half the rank and gallantry of Avignon. Her female attendants were beset with bribes and billets, and nightly, beneath her lattice, was heard the plaintive serenade. She entered largely into the gay dissipation of the town, and her charms shared the celebrity of the hour with the verse of Petrarch. But though she frowned on none, none could claim the monopoly of her smiles. Her fair fame was as yet unblemished; but if any might presume beyond the rest, she seemed to have selected rather from ambition than love, and Giles, the warlike Cardinal d'Albornoz, all powerful at the sacred court, already foreboded the hour of his triumph.

It was late noon, and in the ante-chamber of the fair Signora waited two of that fraternity of pages, fair and richly clad, who at that day furnished the favorite attendants to rank of either sex.

"By my troth," cried one of these young servitors, pushing from him the dice with which himself and his companion had sought to beguile their leisure, "this is but dull work! and the best part of the day is gone. Our lady is late."

"And I have donned my new velvet mantle," replied the other, compassionately eyeing his finery.

"Chut, Giacomo," said his comrade, yawning; "a truce with

thy conceit! What news abroad, I wonder? Has his Holiness come to his senses yet?"

"His senses: what, is he mad then?" quoth Giacomo, in a serious and astonished whisper.

"I think he is, if, being Pope, he does not discover that he may at length lay aside mask and hood. 'Continent Cardinal—lewd Pope,' is the old motto, you know; something must be the matter with the good man's brain if he continue to live like a hermit."

"Oh, I have you! But faith, his Holiness has proxies eno! The bishops take care to prevent women, Heaven bless them! going out of fashion; and Albornoz does not maintain your proverb touching the Cardinals."

"True; but Giles is a warrior,—a cardinal in the church, but a soldier in the city."

"Will he carry the fort here, think you, Angelo?"

"Why, fort is female, but —"

"But what?"

"The Signora's brow is made for power rather than love, fair as it is. She sees in Albornoz the prince, and not the lover. With what a step she sweeps the floor! it disdains even the cloth of gold!"

"Hark!" cried Giacomo, hastening to the lattice, "hear you the hoofs below? Ah, a gallant company!"

"Returned from hawking," answered Angelo, regarding wistfully the cavalcade as it swept the narrow street. "Plumes waving, steeds curveting—see how yon handsome cavalier presses close to that dame!"

"His mantle is the color of mine," sighed Giacomo.

As the gay procession paced slowly on till hidden by the winding street, and as the sound of laughter and the tramp of horses was yet faintly heard, there frowned right before the straining gaze of the pages a dark massive tower of the mighty masonry of the eleventh century; the sun gleamed sadly on its vast and dismal surface, which was only here and there relieved by loopholes and narrow slits, rather than casements. It was a striking contrast to the gayety around,—the glittering shops, and the gaudy train that had just filled the space below.

This contrast the young men seemed involuntarily to feel ; they drew back, and looked at each other.

"I know your thoughts, Giacomo," said Angelo, the handsomer and elder of the two. "You think yon tower affords but a gloomy lodgment ?"

"And I thank my stars that made me not high enough to require so grand a cage," rejoined Giacomo.

"Yet," observed Angelo, "it holds one who in birth was not our superior."

"Do tell me something of that strange man," said Giacomo, regaining his seat ; "you are Roman, and should know."

"Yes," answered Angelo, haughtily drawing himself up, "I *am* Roman ; and I should be unworthy my birth if I had not already learned what honor is due to the name of Cola di Rienzi !"

"Yet your fellow-Romans nearly stoned him, I fancy," muttered Giacomo. "Honor seems to lie more in kicks than money. Can you tell me," continued the page, in a louder key, "can you tell me if it be true that Rienzi appeared at Prague before the Emperor, and prophesied that the late Pope and all the Cardinals should be murdered, and a new Italian Pope elected, who should endue the Emperor with a golden crown, as Sovereign of Sicilia, Calabria, and Apulia,¹ and himself with a crown of silver as King of Rome and all Italy ? And —"

"Hush !" interrupted Angelo, impatiently. "Listen to me, and you shall know the exact story. On *last* leaving Rome (thou knowest that, after his fall, he was present at the Jubilee in disguise) the Tribune —" here Angelo, pausing, looked round, and then with a flushed cheek and raised voice resumed, "yes, the *Tribune*, that *was* and *shall* be — travelled in disguise, as a pilgrim, over mountain and forest, night and day, exposed to rain and storm, no shelter but the cave, — he who had been, they say, the very spoilt one of Luxury. Arrived at length in Bohemia, he disclosed himself to a Florentine in Prague, and through his aid obtained audience of the Emperor Charles."

¹ An absurd fable, adopted by certain historians.

"A prudent man, the Emperor!" said Giacomo, "close-fisted as a miser. He makes conquests by bargain, and goes to market for laurels, — as I have heard my brother say, who was under him."

"True; but I have also heard that he likes bookmen and scholars, is wise and temperate, and much is yet hoped from him in Italy. Before the Emperor, I say, came Rienzi. 'Know, great Prince,' said he, 'that I am that Rienzi to whom God gave to govern Rome, in peace, with justice, and to freedom. I curbed the nobles, I purged corruption, I amended law. The powerful persecuted me; pride and envy have chased me from my dominions. Great as you are, fallen as I am, I too have wielded the sceptre, and might have worn a crown. Know, too, that I am illegitimately of your lineage; my father the son of Henry VII.,¹ the blood of the Teutons rolls in my veins, mean as were my earlier fortunes and humble my earlier name! From you, O king, I seek protection and I demand justice.'" ²

"A bold speech, and one from equal to equal," said Giacomo; "surely you swell us out the words."

"Not a whit; they were written down by the Emperor's scribe, and every Roman who has once heard knows them by heart: once every Roman was the equal to a king, and Rienzi maintained our dignity in asserting his own."

Giacomo, who discreetly avoided quarrels, knew the weak side of his friend; and though in his heart he thought the Romans as good-for-nothing a set of turbulent dastards as all Italy might furnish, he merely picked a straw from his mantle and said, in rather an impatient tone, "Humph! proceed! did the Emperor dismiss him?"

"Not so: Charles was struck with his bearing and his spirit, received him graciously, and entertained him hospitably. He remained some time at Prague, and astonished all the learned with his knowledge and eloquence."³

¹ Uncle to the Emperor Charles.

² See, for this speech, the *Anonymous Biographer*, lib. ii. cap. 12.

³ His Italian contemporary delights in representing this remarkable man as another Crichton. "Disputava," he says of him when at Prague, "disputava

"But if so honored at Prague, how comes he a prisoner at Avignon?"

"Giacomo," said Angelo, thoughtfully, "there are some men whom we, of another mind and mould, can rarely comprehend, and never fathom. And of such men I have observed that a supreme confidence in their own fortunes or their own souls is the most common feature. Thus impressed and thus buoyed, they rush into danger with a seeming madness, and from danger soar to greatness, or sink to death. So with Rienzi; dissatisfied with empty courtesies and weary of playing the pedant, since once he had played the prince, some say of his own accord, — though others relate that he was surrendered to the Pope's legate by Charles, — he left the Emperor's court, and without arms, without money, betook himself at once to Avignon!"

"Madness indeed!"

"Yet perhaps his only course, under all circumstances," resumed the elder page. "Once before his fall, and once during his absence from Rome, he had been excommunicated by the Pope's legate. He was accused of heresy, the ban was still on him. It was necessary that he should clear himself. How was the poor exile to do so? No powerful friend stood up for the friend of the people. No courtier vindicated one who had trampled on the neck of the nobles. His own genius was his only friend; on that only could he rely. He sought Avignon, to free himself from the accusations against him; and doubtless he hoped that there was but one step from his acquittal to his restoration. Besides, it is certain that the Emperor had been applied to formally to surrender Rienzi. He had the choice before him; for to that sooner or later it must come, — to go free, or to go in bonds; as a criminal, or as a Roman. He chose the latter. Wherever he passed along, the people rose in every town, in every hamlet. The name of the great Tribune was honored throughout all Italy. They besought him not to rush into the very den of peril; they implored him to save himself

con Mastri di teologia; molto diceva, parlava cose meravigliose . . . abbair fea ogni persona." — "He disputed with Masters of theology; he spoke much, he discoursed things wonderful; he astonished every one."

for that country which he had sought to raise. 'I go to vindicate myself and to triumph,' was the Tribune's answer. Solemn honors were paid him in the cities through which he passed;¹ and I am told that never ambassador, prince, or baron entered Avignon with so long a train as that which followed into these very walls the steps of Cola di Rienzi."

"And on his arrival?"

"He demanded an audience, that he might refute the charges against him. He flung down the gage to the proud cardinals who had excommunicated him. He besought a trial."

"And what said the Pope?"

"Nothing — by word. Yon tower was his answer!"

"A rough one!"

"But there have been longer roads than that from the prison to the palace, and God made not men like Rienzi for the dungeon and the chain."

As Angelo said this with a loud voice, and with all the enthusiasm with which the fame of the fallen Tribune had inspired the youth of Rome, he heard a sigh behind him. He turned in some confusion, and at the door which admitted to the chamber occupied by the Signora Cesarini stood a female of noble presence. Attired in the richest garments, gold and gems were dull to the lustre of her dark eyes; and as she now stood, erect and commanding, never seemed brow more made for the regal crown, never did human beauty more fully consummate the ideal of a heroine and a queen.

"Pardon me, Signora," said Angelo, hesitatingly, "I spoke loud, I disturbed you; but I am Roman, and my theme was —"

"Rienzi!" said the lady, approaching, — "a fit one to stir a Roman heart. Nay, no excuses; they would sound ill on thy generous lips. Ah! if —" The Signora paused suddenly, and sighed again; then in an altered and graver tone she resumed: "If fate restore Rienzi to his proper fortunes, he shall know what thou deemest of him."

¹ Per tutto la via li furo fatti solenni onori, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 13.

"If you, lady, who are of Naples," said Angelo, with meaning emphasis, "speak thus of a fallen exile, what must I have felt who acknowledged a sovereign?"

"Rienzi is not of Rome alone, — he is of Italy, of the world," returned the Signora. "And you, Angelo, who have had the boldness to speak thus of one fallen, have proved with what loyalty you can serve those who have the fortune to own you."

As she spoke, the Signora looked at the page's downcast and blushing face long and wistfully, with the gaze of one accustomed to read the soul in the countenance.

"Men are often deceived," said she sadly, yet with a half smile, "but women rarely, — save in love. Would that Rome were filled with such as you! Enough! Hark! Is that the sound of hoofs in the court below?"

"Madam," said Giacomo, bringing his mantle gallantly over his shoulder, "I see the servitors of Monsignore the Cardinal d'Albornoz. It is the Cardinal himself."

"It is well!" said the Signora, with a brightening eye; "I await him!" With these words she withdrew by the door through which she had surprised the Roman page.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR-PRIEST. — AN INTERVIEW. — THE INTRIGUE AND COUNTER-INTRIGUE OF COURTS.

GILES (or Egidio¹), Cardinal d'Albornoz, was one of the most remarkable men of that remarkable time so prodigal of genius. Boasting his descent from the royal houses of Arragon and Leon, he had early entered the Church, and yet almost a youth, attained the archbishopric of Toledo. But no peaceful career, however brilliant, sufficed to his ambition. He could

¹ Egidio is the proper Italian equivalent to the French name Gilles; but the Cardinal is generally called, by the writers of that day, Gilio d'Albornoz.

not content himself with the honors of the Church unless they were the honors of a Church militant. In the war against the Moors, no Spaniard had more highly distinguished himself; and Alphonso XI., king of Castile, had insisted on receiving from the hand of the martial priest the badge of knighthood. After the death of Alphonso, who was strongly attached to him, Albornozy repaired to Avignon, and obtained from Clement VI. the cardinal's hat. With Innocent he continued in high favor; and now, constantly in the councils of the Pope, rumors of warlike preparation, under the banners of Albornozy, for the recovery of the papal dominions from the various tyrants that usurped them, were already circulated through the court.¹ Bold, sagacious, enterprising, and cold-hearted, — with the valor of the knight and the cunning of the priest, — such was the character of Giles, Cardinal d'Albornozy.

Leaving his attendant gentlemen in the antechamber, Albornozy was ushered into the apartment of the Signora Cesarini. In person, the Cardinal was about the middle height; the dark complexion of Spain had faded, by thought and the wear of ambitious schemes, into a sallow but hardy hue; his brow was deeply furrowed; and though not yet past the prime of life, Albornozy might seem to have entered age, but for the firmness of his step, the slender elasticity of his frame, and an eye which had acquired calmness and depth from thought, without losing any of the brilliancy of youth.

"Beautiful Signora," said the Cardinal, bending over the hand of the Cesarini with a grace which betokened more of the prince than of the priest, "the commands of his Holiness have detained me, I fear, beyond the hour in which you vouchsafed to appoint my homage; but my heart has been with you since we parted."

¹ It is a characteristic anecdote of this bold Churchman that Urban V. one day demanded an account of the sums spent in his military expedition against the Italian tyrants. The Cardinal presented to the Pope a wagon filled with the keys of the cities and fortresses he had taken. "This is my account," said he; "you perceive how I have invested your money." The Pope embraced him, and gave him no further trouble about his accounts.

"The Cardinal d'Albornoz," replied the Signora, gently withdrawing her hand and seating herself, "has so many demands on his time, from the duties of his rank and renown, that methinks to divert his attention for a few moments to less noble thoughts is a kind of treason to his fame."

"Ah! lady," replied the Cardinal, "never was my ambition so nobly directed as it is now. And it were a prouder lot to be at thy feet than on the throne of Saint Peter."

A momentary blush passed over the cheek of the Signora, yet it seemed the blush of indignation as much as of vanity; it was succeeded by an extreme paleness. She paused before she replied; and then, fixing her large and haughty eyes on the enamoured Spaniard, she said, in a low voice, —

"My Lord Cardinal, I do not affect to misunderstand your words, neither do I place them to the account of a general gallantry. I am vain enough to believe you imagine you speak truly when you say you love me."

"Imagine!" echoed the Spaniard.

"Listen to me," continued the Signora. "She whom the Cardinal Albornoz honors with his love has a right to demand of him its proofs. In the Papal Court, whose power like his? I require you to exercise it for me."

"Speak, dearest lady! Have your estates been seized by the barbarians of these lawless times? Hath any dared to injure you? Lands and titles, — are these thy wish? My power is thy slave."

"Cardinal, no! There is one thing dearer to an Italian and a woman than wealth or station, — it is revenge!"

The Cardinal drew back from the flashing eye that was bent upon him, but the spirit of her speech touched a congenial chord.

"There," said he, after a little hesitation, "there spake high descent. Revenge is the luxury of the well-born. Let serfs and churls forgive an injury. Proceed, lady."

"Hast thou heard the last news from Rome?" asked the Signora.

"Surely," replied the Cardinal, in some surprise, "we were poor statesmen to be ignorant of the condition of the capital

of the papal dominions; and my heart mourns for that unfortunate city. But wherefore wouldst thou question me of Rome? Thou art—"

"Roman! Know, my lord, that I have a purpose in calling myself of Naples. To your discretion I intrust my secret,—I am of Rome! Tell me of her state."

"Fairest one," returned the Cardinal, "I should have known that that brow and presence were not of the light *Campania*. My reason should have told me that they bore the stamp of the Empress of the World. The state of Rome," continued Alborno, in a graver tone, "is briefly told. Thou knowest that after the fall of the able but insolent Rienzi, Pepin, Count of Minorbino (a creature of Montreal's), who had assisted in expelling him, would have betrayed Rome to Montreal; but he was neither strong enough nor wise enough, and the Barons chased him as he had chased the Tribune. Some time afterwards a new demagogue, John Cerroni, was installed in the Capitol. He once more expelled the nobles; new revolutions ensued; the Barons were recalled. The weak successor of Rienzi summoned the people to arms,—in vain; in terror and despair he abdicated his power, and left the city a prey to the interminable feuds of the Orsini, the Colonna, and the Savelli."

"Thus much I know, my lord; but when his Holiness succeeded to the chair of Clement VI. —"

"Then," said Alborno, and a slight frown darkened his sallow brow, "then came the blacker part of the history. Two senators were elected in concert by the Pope."

"Their names?"

"Bertoldo Orsini, and one of the Colonna. A few weeks afterwards the high price of provisions stung the rascal stomachs of the mob; they rose, they clamored, they armed, they besieged the Capitol —"

"Well, well!" cried the Signora, clasping her hands, and betokening in every feature her interest in the narration.

"Colonna only escaped death by a vile disguise; Bertoldo Orsini was stoned."

"Stoned! — there fell one!"

"Yes, lady, one of a great house, the least drop of whose blood were worth an ocean of plebeian puddle. At present all is disorder, misrule, anarchy, at Rome. The contests of the nobles shake the city to the centre; and prince and people, wearied of so many experiments to establish a government, have now no governor but the fear of the sword. Such, fair madam, is the state of Rome. Sigh not; it occupies now our care. It shall be remedied; and I, madam, may be the happy instrument of restoring peace to your native city."

"There is but one way of restoring peace to Rome," answered the Signora, abruptly, "and that is, — the restoration of Rienzi!"

The Cardinal started. "Madam," said he, "do I hear aright? Are you not nobly born? Can you desire the rise of a plebeian? Did you not speak of revenge, and now you ask for mercy?"

"Lord Cardinal," said the beautiful Signora, earnestly, "I do not ask for mercy; such a word is not for the lips of one who demands justice. Nobly born I am, — ay, and from a stock to whose long descent from the patricians of ancient Rome the high line of Aragon itself would be of yesterday. Nay, I would not offend you, Monsignore; your greatness is not borrowed from pedigrees and tombstones, — your greatness is your own achieving. Would you speak honestly, my lord, you would own that you are proud only of *your own* laurels, and that, in your heart, you laugh at the stately fools who trick themselves out in the mouldering finery of the dead!"

"Muse! prophetess! you speak aright," said the high-spirited Cardinal, with unwonted energy; "and your voice is like that of the Fame I dreamed of in my youth. Speak on, speak ever!"

"Such," continued the Signora, "such as your pride is the just pride of Rienzi; proud that he is the workman of his own great renown. In such as the Tribune of Rome we acknowledge the founders of noble lineage. Ancestry makes not them, — they make ancestry. Enough of this. I am of noble race, it is true; but my house, and those of many,

have been crushed and broken beneath the yoke of the Orsini and Colonna, — it is against them I desire revenge. But I am better than an Italian lady, — I am a Roman woman; I weep tears of blood for the disorders of my unhappy country. I mourn that even you, my lord, — yes, that a barbarian, however eminent and however great, — should mourn for Rome. I desire to restore her fortunes.”

“But Rienzi would only restore his own.”

“Not so, my Lord Cardinal; not so. Ambitious and proud he may be, — great souls are so, — but he has never had one wish divorced from the welfare of Rome. But put aside all thought of his interests; it is not of these I speak. You desire to re-establish the papal power in Rome. Your senators have failed to do it. Demagogues fail, — Rienzi alone can succeed; he alone can command the turbulent passions of the Barons; he alone can sway the capricious and fickle mob. Release, restore Rienzi, and through Rienzi the Pope regains Rome!”

The Cardinal did not answer for some moments. Buried as in a revery, he sat motionless, shading his face with his hand. Perhaps he secretly owned there was a wiser policy in the suggestions of the Signora than he cared openly to confess. Lifting his head, at length, from his bosom, he fixed his eyes upon the Signora's watchful countenance, and with a forced smile said, —

“Pardon me, madam; but while we play the politicians, forget not that I am thy adorer. Sagacious may be thy counsels, yet wherefore are they urged? Why this anxious interest for Rienzi? If by releasing him the Church may gain an ally, am I sure that Giles d'Albornoz will not raise a rival?”

“My lord,” said the Signora, half rising, “you are my suitor; but your rank does not tempt me, your gold cannot buy. If you love me, I have a right to command your services to whatsoever task I would require: it is the law of chivalry. If ever I yield to the addresses of mortal lover, it will be to the man who restores to my native land her hero and her savior.”

“Fair patriot,” said the Cardinal, “your words encourage my hope, yet they half damp my ambition; for fain would I

desire that love, and not service, should alone give me the treasure that I ask. But hear me, sweet lady: you overrate my power; I cannot deliver Rienzi,—he is accused of rebellion, he is excommunicated for heresy. His acquittal rests with himself."

"You can procure his trial?"

"Perhaps, lady."

"That *is* his acquittal. And a private audience of his Holiness?"

"Doubtless."

"*That* is his restoration! Behold all I ask!"

"And then, sweet Roman, it will be *mine* to ask," said the Cardinal, passionately, dropping on his knee, and taking the Signora's hand. For one moment that proud lady felt that she was woman,—she blushed, she trembled; but it was not (could the Cardinal have read that heart) with passion or with weakness, it was with terror and with shame. Passively she surrendered her hand to the Cardinal, who covered it with kisses.

"Thus inspired," said Alborno, rising, "I will not doubt of success. To-morrow I wait on thee again."

He pressed her hand to his heart—the lady felt it not. He sighed his farewell—she did not hear it. Lingeringly he gazed, and slowly he departed. But it was some moments before, recalled to herself, the Signora felt that she was alone.

"Alone!" she cried, half aloud, and with wild emphasis, "alone! Oh, what have I undergone, what have I said? Unfaithful even in thought to *him*? Oh, never, never! I that have felt the kiss of his hallowing lips, that have slept on his kingly heart—I!—Holy Mother, befriend and strengthen me!" she continued, as, weeping bitterly, she sank upon her knees; and for some moments she was lost in prayer. Then, rising composed, but deadly pale, and with the tears rolling heavily down her cheeks, the Signora passed slowly to the casement. She threw it open, and bent forward; the air of the declining day came softly on her temples; it cooled, it mitigated, the fever that preyed within. Dark and huge be-

fore her frowned, in its gloomy shadow, the tower in which Rienzi was confined; she gazed at it long and wistfully, and then, turning away, drew from the folds of her robe a small and sharp dagger. "Let me save him for glory!" she murmured, "and *this* shall save me from dishonor!"

CHAPTER III.

HOLY MEN. — SAGACIOUS DELIBERATIONS. — JUST RESOLVES.
— AND SORDID MOTIVES TO ALL.

ENAMOURED of the beauty, and almost equally so of the lofty spirit, of the Signora Cesarini, as was the warlike Cardinal of Spain, love with him was not so master a passion as that ambition of complete success in all the active designs of life which had hitherto animated his character and signalized his career. Musing, as he left the Signora, on her wish for the restoration of the Roman Tribune, his experienced and profound intellect ran swiftly through whatever advantages to his own political designs might result from that restoration. We have seen that it was the intention of the new Pontiff to attempt the recovery of the patrimonial territories, now torn from him by the gripe of able and disaffected tyrants. With this view, a military force was already in preparation, and the Cardinal was already secretly nominated the chief. But the force was very inadequate to the enterprise, and AlbornoZ depended much upon the moral strength of the cause in bringing recruits to his standard in his progress through the Italian states. The wonderful rise of Rienzi had excited an extraordinary enthusiasm in his favor through all the free populations of Italy. And this had been yet more kindled and inflamed by the influential eloquence of Petrarch, who, at that time possessed of a power greater than ever, before or since (not even excepting the Sage of Ferney), wielded by a single literary man, had put forth his boldest genius in behalf of the

Roman Tribune. Such a companion as Rienzi in the camp of the Cardinal might be a magnet of attraction to the youth and enterprise of Italy. On nearing Rome, he might himself judge how far it would be advisable to reinstate Rienzi as a delegate of the papal power. And in the meanwhile the Roman's influence might be serviceable, whether to awe the rebellious nobles or conciliate the stubborn people. On the other hand, the Cardinal was shrewd enough to perceive that no possible good could arise from Rienzi's present confinement. With every month it excited deeper and more universal sympathy. To his lonely dungeon turned half the hearts of republican Italy. Literature had leagued its new and sudden, and therefore mighty and even disproportioned, power with his cause; and the Pope, without daring to be his judge, incurred the odium of being his jailer. "A popular prisoner," said the sagacious Cardinal to himself, "is the most dangerous of guests. Restore him as your servant, or destroy him as your foe. In this case I see no alternative but acquittal or the knife." In these reflections that able plotter, deep in the Machiavelism of the age, divorced the lover from the statesman.

Recurring now to the former character, he felt some disagreeable and uneasy forebodings at the earnest interest of his mistress. Fain would he have attributed, either to some fastasy of patriotism or some purpose of revenge, the anxiety of the Cesarini; and there was much in her stern and haughty character which favored that belief. But he was forced to acknowledge to himself some jealous apprehension of a sinister and latent motive, which touched his vanity and alarmed his love. "Howbeit," he thought, as he turned from his unwilling fear, "I can play with her at her own weapons: I can obtain the release of Rienzi, and claim my reward. If denied, the hand that opened the dungeon can again rivet the chain. In her anxiety is my power!"

These thoughts the Cardinal was still revolving in his palace, when he was suddenly summoned to attend the Pontiff.

The pontifical palace no longer exhibited the gorgeous yet graceful luxury of Clement VI., and the sarcastic Cardinal

smiled to himself at the quiet gloom of the ante-chambers. "He thinks to set an example, this poor native of Limoges!" thought Alborno; "and has but the mortification of finding himself eclipsed by the poorest bishop. He humbles himself, and fancies that the humility will be contagious!"

His Holiness was seated before a small and rude table bestrewed with papers, his face buried in his hands; the room was simply furnished, and in a small niche beside the casement was an ivory crucifix; below, the death's head and cross-bones, which most monks then introduced with a purpose similar to that of the ancients by the like ornaments, — mementos of the shortness of life, and therefore admonitions to make the best of it. On the ground lay a map of the Patrimonial Territory, with the fortresses in especial distinctly and prominently marked. The Pope gently lifted up his head as the Cardinal was announced, and discovered a plain but sensible and somewhat interesting countenance. "My son!" said he, with a kindly courtesy to the lowly salutation of the proud Spaniard, "scarcely wouldst thou imagine, after our long conference this morning, that new cares would so soon demand the assistance of thy counsels. Verily, the wreath of thorns stings sharp under the triple crown; and I sometimes long for the quiet abode of my old professor's chair in Toulouse: my station is of pain and of toil."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," observed the Cardinal, with pious and compassionate gravity.

Innocent could scarcely refrain a smile as he replied: "The lamb that carries the cross must have the strength of the lion. Since we parted, my son, I have had painful intelligence; our couriers have arrived from the Campagna, — the heathen rage furiously, — the force of John di Vico has augmented fearfully, and the most redoubted adventurer of Europe has enlisted under his banner."

"Does his Holiness," cried the Cardinal, anxiously, "speak of Fra Moreale, the Knight of St. John?"

"Of no less a warrior," returned the Pontiff. "I dread the vast ambition of that wild adventurer."

"Your Holiness hath cause," said the Cardinal, dryly.

"Some letters of his have fallen into the hands of the servants of the Church; they are here: read them, my son."

Albornoz received and deliberately scanned the letters; this done, he replaced them on the table, and remained for a few moments silent and absorbed.

"What think you, my son?" said the Pope at length, with an impatient and even peevish tone.

"I think that, with Montreal's hot genius and John di Vico's frigid villany, your Holiness may live to envy, if not the quiet, at least the revenue, of the Professor's chair."

"How, Cardinal!" said the Pope, hastily, and with an angry flush on his pale brow. The Cardinal quietly proceeded.

"By these letters it seems that Montreal has written to all the commanders of free lances throughout Italy, offering the highest pay of a soldier to every man who will join his standard, combined with the richest plunder of a brigand. He meditates great schemes, then! I know the man!"

"Well, and our course?"

"Is plain," said the Cardinal, loftily, and with an eye that flashed with a soldier's fire. "Not a moment is to be lost! Thy son should at once take the field. Up with the Banner of the Church!"

"But are we strong enough? our numbers are few. Zeal slackens! the piety of the Baldwins is no more!"

"Your Holiness knows well," said the Cardinal, "that for the multitude of men there are two watchwords of war, — Liberty and Religion. If Religion begins to fail, we must employ the profaner word. 'Up with the Banner of the Church, and down with the tyrants!' We will proclaim equal laws and free government;¹ and, God willing, our camp shall prosper better with those promises than the tents of Montreal with the more vulgar shout of 'Pay and Rapine.'"

"Giles d'Albornoz," said the Pope, emphatically, — and warmed by the spirit of the Cardinal, he dropped the wonted

¹ In correcting the pages of this work, in the year 1847 . . . , strange coincidences between the present policy of the Roman Church and that by which in the fourteenth century it recovered both spiritual and temporal power, cannot fail to suggest themselves.

etiquette of the phrase: "I trust implicitly to you, — now the right hand of the Church, hereafter, perhaps, its head. Too well I feel that the lot has fallen on a lowly place. My successor must requite my deficiencies."

No changing hue, no brightening glance, betrayed to the searching eye of the Pope whatever emotion these words had called up in the breast of the ambitious Cardinal. He bowed his proud head humbly as he answered: "Pray Heaven that Innocent VI. may long live to guide the Church to glory. For Giles d'Albornoz, less priest than soldier, the din of the camp, the breath of the war-steed, suggest the only aspirations which he ever dares indulge. But has your Holiness imparted to your servant all that —"

"Nay," interrupted Innocent, "I have yet intelligence equally ominous. This John di Vico, — pest go with him! — who still styles himself (the excommunicated ruffian!) Prefect of Rome, has so filled that unhappy city with his emissaries that we have well-nigh lost the seat of the Apostle. Rome, long in anarchy, seems now in open rebellion. The nobles — sons of Belial! — it is true, are once more humbled; but how? One Baroncelli, a new demagogue, the fiercest, the most bloody that the Fiend ever helped, has arisen, is invested by the mob with power, and uses it to butcher the people and insult the Pontiff! Wearied of the crimes of this man, — which are not even decorated by ability, — the shout of the people day and night along the streets is for 'Rienzi the Tribune.'"

"Ha!" said the Cardinal, "Rienzi's faults then are forgotten in Rome, and there is felt for him the same enthusiasm in that city as in the rest of Italy?"

"Alas! it is so."

"It is well; I have thought of this: Rienzi can accompany my progress —"

"My son! the rebel, the heretic —"

"By your Holiness's absolution will become a quiet subject and orthodox Catholic," said Albornoz. "Men are good or bad as they suit our purpose. What matters a virtue that is useless, or a crime that is useful to us? The army of the Church proceeds against tyrants: it proclaims everywhere to the Papal

towns the restoration of their popular constitutions. Sees not your Holiness that the acquittal of Rienzi, the popular darling, will be hailed an earnest of your sincerity? Sees not your Holiness that his name will fight for us? Sees not your Holiness that the great demagogue Rienzi must be used to extinguish the little demagogue Baroncelli? We must regain the Romans, whether of the city or whether in the seven towns of John di Vico. When they hear Rienzi is in our camp, trust me, we shall have a multitude of deserters from the tyrants; trust me we shall hear no more of Baroncelli."

"Ever sagacious," said the Pope, musingly. "It is true we can use this man; but with caution. His genius is formidable —"

"And therefore must be conciliated; if we acquit, we must make him ours. My experience has taught me this: when you cannot slay a demagogue by law, crush him with honors. He must be no longer Tribune of the People. Give him the Patrician title of *Senator*, and he is then the Lieutenant of the Pope!"

"I will see to this, my son. Your suggestions please, but alarm me; he shall at least be examined. But if found a heretic —"

"Should, I humbly advise, be declared a saint."

The Pope bent his brow for a moment; but the effort was too much for him, and after a moment's struggle he fairly laughed aloud.

"Go to, my son!" said he, affectionately patting the Cardinal's sallow cheek. "Go to! If the world heard thee, what would it say?"

"That Giles d'Albornoz had just enough religion to remember that the State is a Church, but not too much to forget that the Church is a State."

With these words the conference ended. That very evening the Pope decreed that Rienzi should be permitted the trial he had demanded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY AND THE PAGE.

It wanted three hours of midnight when Alborno, resuming his character of gallant, despatched to the Signora Cesarini the following billet:—

“Your commands are obeyed. Rienzi will receive an examination on his faith. It is well that he should be prepared. It may suit your purpose, as to which I am so faintly enlightened, to appear to the prisoner what you are,—the obtainer of this grace. See how implicitly one noble heart can trust another! I send by the bearer an order that will admit one of your servitors to the prisoner’s cell. Be it, if you will, your task to announce to him the new crisis of his fate. Ah! madam, may fortune be as favorable to me, and grant me the same intercessor! From thy lips my sentence is to come.”

As Alborno finished this epistle, he summoned his confidential attendant, a Spanish gentleman who saw nothing in his noble birth that should prevent his fulfilling the various behests of the Cardinal.

“Alvarez,” said he, “these to the Signora Cesarini by another hand; thou art unknown to her household. Repair to the state tower: this to the Governor admits thee. Mark who is admitted to the prisoner Cola di Rienzi. Know his name, examine whence he comes. Be keen, Alvarez. Learn by what motive the Cesarini interests herself in the prisoner’s fate. All too of herself,—birth, fortunes, lineage,—would be welcome intelligence. Thou comprehendest me? It is well. One caution,—thou hast no mission from, no connection with, me. Thou art an officer of the prison, or of the Pope,—what thou wilt. Give me the rosary; light the lamp before the crucifix; place yon hair-shirt beneath those arms. I would have it appear as if *meant* to be hidden! Tell Gomez that the Dominican preacher is to be admitted.”

"Those friars have zeal," continued the Cardinal to himself, as, after executing his orders, Alvarez withdrew. "They would burn a man, but only on the Bible! They are worth conciliating, if the triple crown be really worth the winning; were it mine, I would add the eagle's plume to it."

And plunged into the aspiring future, this bold man forgot even the object of his passion. In real life, after a certain age, ambitious men love, indeed, but it is only as an interlude. And indeed with most men, life has more absorbing, though not more frequent, concerns than those of love. Love is the business of the idle, but the idleness of the busy.

The Cesarini was alone when the Cardinal's messenger arrived; and he was scarcely dismissed with a few lines, expressive of a gratitude which seemed to bear down all those guards with which the coldness of the Signora usually fenced her pride, before the page Angelo was summoned to her presence.

The room was dark with the shades of the gathering night when the youth entered, and he discerned but dimly the outline of the Signora's stately form; but by the tone of her voice he perceived that she was deeply agitated.

"Angelo," said she, as he approached, "Angelo—" and her voice failed her. She paused as for breath, and again proceeded: "You alone have served us faithfully; you alone shared our escape, our wanderings, our exile; you alone know my secret; you of my train alone are Roman!—Roman! it was once a great name. Angelo, the name has fallen; but it is only because the nature of the Roman race fell first. Haughty they are, but fickle; fierce, but dastard; vehement in promise, but rotten in their faith. You are a Roman; and though I have proved your truth, your very birth makes me afraid of falsehood."

"Madam," said the page, "I was but a child when you admitted me into your service, and I am yet only on the verge of manhood. But boy though I yet be, I would brave the stoutest lance of knight or freebooter in defence of the faith of Angelo Villani to his liege lady and his native land."

"Alas! alas!" said the Signora, bitterly, "such have been the *words* of thousands of thy race. What have been their

deeds? But I will trust thee, as I have trusted ever. I know that thou art covetous of honor, that thou hast youth's comely and bright ambition."

"I am an orphan and a bastard," said Angelo, bluntly, "and circumstance stings me sharply on to action; I would win my own name."

"Thou shalt," said the Signora. "We shall live yet to reward thee. And now be quick. Bring hither one of thy page's suits, — mantle and head-gear. Quick, I say; and whisper not to a soul what I have asked of thee."

CHAPTER V.

THE INMATE OF THE TOWER.

THE night slowly advanced, and in the highest chamber of that dark and rugged tower which fronted the windows of the Cesarini's palace sat a solitary prisoner. A single lamp burned before him on a table of stone and threw its rays over an open Bible, and those stern but fantastic legends of the prowess of ancient Rome which the genius of Livy has dignified into history.¹ A chain hung pendent from the vault of the tower and confined the captive, but so as to leave his limbs at sufficient liberty to measure at will the greater part of the cell. Green and damp were the mighty stones of the walls, and through a narrow aperture, high out of reach, came the moonlight, and slept in long shadow over the rude floor. A bed at one corner completed the furniture of the room. Such for months had been the abode of the conqueror of the haughtiest Barons, and the luxurious dictator of the stateliest city of the world!

Care and travel and time and adversity had wrought their change in the person of Rienzi. The proportions of his frame

¹ Avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia et altri libri assai, non finava di studiare. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 13. See translation to motto to Book VII. p. 86.

had enlarged from the compact strength of earlier manhood; the clear paleness of his cheek was bespread with a hectic and deceitful glow. Even in his present studies, intent as they seemed, and genial though the lecture to a mind enthusiastic even to fanaticism, his eyes could not rivet themselves as of yore steadily to the page. The charm was gone from the letters. Every now and then he moved restlessly, started, re-settled himself, and muttered broken exclamations like a man in an anxious dream. Anon, his gaze impatiently turned upward, about, around, and there was a strange and wandering fire in those large, deep eyes which might have thrilled the beholder with a vague and unaccountable awe.

Angelo had in the main correctly narrated the more recent adventures of Rienzi after his fall. He had first with Nina and Angelo betaken himself to Naples, and found a fallacious and brief favor with Louis, king of Hungary; that harsh but honorable monarch had refused to yield his illustrious guest to the demands of Clement, but had plainly declared his inability to shelter him in safety. Maintaining secret intercourse with his partisans at Rome, the fugitive then sought a refuge with the Eremites, sequestered in the lone recesses of the Monte Maiella, where in solitude and thought he had passed a whole year, save the time consumed in his visit to and return from Florence. Taking advantage of the Jubilee in Rome, he had then, disguised as a pilgrim, traversed the vales and mountains still rich in the melancholy ruins of ancient Rome, and entering the city, his restless and ambitious spirit indulged in new but vain conspiracies.¹ Excommunicated a second time by the Cardinal di Ceccano, and again a fugitive, he shook the dust from his feet as he left the city, and raising his hands towards those walls, in which are yet traced the witness of the Tarquins, cried aloud: "Honored as thy prince, persecuted as thy victim, — Rome, Rome, thou shalt yet receive me as thy conqueror!"

Still disguised as a pilgrim, he passed unmolested through Italy into the Court of the Emperor Charles of Bohemia, where the page, who had probably witnessed, had rightly

¹ Rainald, Ann. 1350, N. 4, E. 5.

narrated, his reception. It is doubtful, however, whether the conduct of the Emperor had been as chivalrous as appears by Angelo's relation, or whether he had not delivered Rienzi to the Pontiff's emissaries. At all events, it is certain that from Prague to Avignon, the path of the fallen Tribune had been as one triumph. His strange adventures; his unbroken spirit; the new power that Intellect daily and wonderfully excited over the minds of the rising generation; the eloquence of Petrarch; and the common sympathy of the vulgar for fallen greatness,—all conspired to make Rienzi the hero of the age. Not a town through which he passed which would not have risked a siege for his protection, not a house that would not have sheltered him, not a hand that would not have struck in his defence. Refusing all offers of aid, disdaining all occasion of escape, inspired by his indomitable hope and his unalloyed belief in the brightness of his own destinies, the Tribune sought Avignon—and found a dungeon!

These, his external adventures, are briefly and easily told. But who shall tell what passed within; who narrate the fearful history of the heart; who paint the rapid changes of emotion and of thought, the indignant grief, the stern dejection, the haughty disappointment that saddened while it never destroyed the resolve of that great soul? Who can say what must have been endured, what meditated, in the hermitage of Maiella; on the lonely hills of the perished empire it had been his dream to restore; in the Courts of Barbarian Kings; and above all, on returning, obscure and disguised, amidst the crowds of the Christian world, to the seat of his former power? What elements of memory, and in what a wild and fiery brain! What reflections to be conned in the dungeons of Avignon by a man who had pushed into all the fervor of fanaticism four passions, a single one of which has, in excess, sufficed to wreck the strongest reason,—passions which in themselves it is most difficult to combine: the dreamer, the aspirant, the very nympholept of Freedom, yet of Power, — of knowledge, yet of Religion!

“Ay,” muttered the prisoner, “ay, these texts are comforting,

comforting. The righteous are not always oppressed." With a long sigh he deliberately put aside the Bible, kissed it with great reverence, remained silent and musing for some minutes; and then, as a slight noise was heard at one corner of the cell, said softly, "Ah, my friends, my comrades, the rats! It is their hour; I am glad I put aside the bread for them!" His eye brightened as it now detected those strange and unsocial animals, venturing forth through a hole in the wall, and darkening the moonshine on the floor, steal fearlessly towards him. He flung some fragments of bread to them, and for some moments watched their gambols with a smile. "Manchino, the white-faced rascal! he beats all the rest—ha, ha! he is a superior wretch; he commands the tribe, and will venture the first into the trap. How will he bite against the steel, the fine fellow, while all the ignobler herd will gaze at him afar off, and quake and fear, and never help. Yet if united, they might gnaw the trap and release their leader! Ah! ye are base vermin, ye eat my bread; yet if death came upon me, ye would riot on my carcase. Away!" and clapping his hands, the chain round him clanked harshly, and the noisome co-mates of his dungeon vanished in an instant.

That singular and eccentric humor which marked Rienzi, and which had seemed a buffoonery to the stolid sullenness of the Roman nobles, still retained its old expression in his countenance, and he laughed loud as he saw the vermin hurry back to their hiding-place.

"A little noise and the clank of a chain,—fie, how ye imitate mankind!" Again he sank into silence; and then heavily and listlessly drawing towards him the animated tales of Livy, said: "An hour to midnight! Waking dreams are better than sleep. Well, history tells us how men have risen—ay, and nations too—after sadder falls than that of Rienzi or of Rome!"

In a few minutes he was apparently absorbed in the lecture,—so intent indeed was he in the task that he did not hear the steps which wound the spiral stairs that conducted to his cell; and it was not till the wards harshly grated beneath the huge key, and the door creaked on its hinges, that Rienzi, in amaze

at intrusion at so unwonted an hour, lifted his eyes. The door had reclosed on the dungeon, and by the lonely and pale lamp he beheld a figure leaning, as for support, against the wall. The figure was wrapped from head to foot in the long cloak of the day, which, aided by a broad hat, shaded by plumes, concealed even the features of the visitor.

Rienzi gazed long and wistfully.

"Speak," said he at length, putting his hand to his brow. "Methinks either long solitude has bewildered me, or, sweet sir, your apparition dazzles; I know you not. Am I sure," and Rienzi's hair bristled while he slowly rose, — "am I sure that it is a living man who stands before me? Angels have entered the prison-house before now. Alas! an angel's comfort never was more needed."

The stranger answered not, but the captive saw that his heart heaved even beneath his cloak; loud sobs choked his voice. At length, as by a violent effort, he sprang forward, and sank at the Tribune's feet. The disguising hat, the long mantle, fell to the ground; it was the face of a woman that looked upward through passionate and glazing tears — the arms of a woman that clasped the prisoner's knees! Rienzi gazed, mute and motionless as stone. "Powers and Saints of Heaven!" he murmured at last, "do ye tempt me further? Is it — no, no — yet speak!"

"Beloved — adored! — do you not know me?"

"It is — it is!" shrieked Rienzi, wildly, "it is my Nina, — my wife, — my —" His voice forsook him. Clasped in each other's arms, the unfortunates for some moments seemed to have lost even the sense of delight at their reunion. It was as an unconscious and deep trance, through which something *like* a dream only faintly and indistinctly stirs.

At length recovered, at length restored, the first broken exclamations, the first wild caresses of joy over, Nina lifted her head from her husband's bosom and gazed sadly on his countenance. "Oh! what thou hast known since we parted, — what, since that hour when, borne on by thy bold heart and wild destiny, thou didst leave me in the Imperial Court, to seek again the diadem and find the chain! Ah! why did I

heed thy commands; why suffer thee to depart alone? How often in thy progress hitherward, in doubt, in danger, might this bosom have been thy resting-place, and this voice have whispered comfort to thy soul! Thou art well, my lord, my Cola? Thy pulse beats quicker than of old, thy brow is furrowed: ah, tell me thou art well!"

"Well," said Rienzi, mechanically. "Methinks so! The mind diseased blunts all sense of bodily decay. Well—yes! And thou,—thou at least art not changed, save to maturer beauty. The glory of the laurel-wreath has not faded from thy brow. Thou shalt yet—" Then breaking off abruptly: "Rome—tell me of Rome! And thou,—how camest thou hither? Ah! perhaps my doom is sealed, and in their mercy they have vouchsafed that I should see thee once more before the deathsmen blinds me. I remember it is the grace vouchsafed to malefactors. When *I* was a lord of life and death, I too permitted the meanest criminal to say farewell to those he loved."

"No, not so, Cola!" exclaimed Nina, putting her hand before his mouth. "I bring thee more auspicious tidings. To-morrow thou art to be heard. The favor of the Court is propitiated. Thou wilt be acquitted."

"Ha! speak again."

"Thou wilt be heard, my Cola; thou must be acquitted!"

"And Rome be free! — Great God, I thank thee!"

The Tribune sank on his knees, and never had his heart, in his youngest and purest hour, poured forth thanksgiving more fervent, yet less selfish. When he rose again, the whole man seemed changed. His eye had resumed its earlier expressions of deep and serene command; majesty sat upon his brow. The sorrows of the exile were forgotten. In his sanguine and rapid thoughts, he stood once more the guardian of his country — and its sovereign!

Nina gazed upon him with that intense and devoted worship which steeped her vainer and her harder qualities in all the fondness of the softest woman. "Such," thought she, "was his look, eight years ago, when he left my maiden chamber, full of the mighty schemes which liberated Rome; such his

look when, at the dawning sun, he towered amidst the crouching Barons and the kneeling population of the city he had made his throne!"

"Yes, Nina," said Rienzi, as he turned and caught her eye, "my soul tells me that my hour is at hand. If they try me openly, they dare not convict; if they acquit me, they dare not but restore. To-morrow, saidst thou, to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, Rienzi; be prepared!"

"I am—for triumph! But tell me what happy chance brought thee to Avignon?"

"*Chance*, Cola!" said Nina, with reproachful tenderness. "Could I know that thou wert in the dungeons of the Pontiff and linger in idle security at Prague? Even at the Emperor's Court thou hadst thy partisans and favorers. Gold was easily procured. I repaired to Florence, disguised my name, and came hither to plot, to scheme, to win thy liberty, or to die with thee. Ah! did not thy heart tell thee that morning and night the eyes of thy faithful Nina gazed upon this gloomy tower, and that one friend, humble though she be, never could forsake thee!"

"Sweet Nina! Yet—yet—at Avignon power yields not to beauty without reward. Remember, there is a worse death than the pause of life."

Nina turned pale. "Fear not," she said, with a low but determined voice; "fear not that men's lips should say Rienzi's wife delivered him. None in this corrupted Court know that I am thy wife."

"Woman," said the Tribune, sternly, "thy lips elude the answer I would seek. In our degenerate time and land, thy sex and ours forget too basely what foulness writes a leprosy in the smallest stain upon a matron's honor. That thy heart would never wrong me, I believe; and if thy weakness, thy fear of my death, should wrong me, thou art a bitterer foe to Rienzi than the swords of the Colonna. Nina, speak!"

"Oh, that my soul could speak!" answered Nina. "Thy words are music to me, and not a thought of mine but echoes them. Could I touch this hand, could I meet that eye, and not know that death were dearer to thee than shame? Rienzi,

when last we parted, — in sadness, yet in hope, — what were thy words to me ? ”

“ I remember them well,” returned the Tribune: “ ‘ I leave thee,’ I said, ‘ to keep alive at the Emperor’s Court, by thy genius, the Great Cause. Thou hast youth and beauty, and courts have lawless and ruffian suitors. I give thee no caution; it were beneath thee and me. But I leave thee the power of death.’ And with that, Nina — ”

“ Thy hands tremblingly placed in mine this dagger. I live. Need I say more ? ”

“ My noble and beloved Nina, it is enough. Keep the dagger yet.”

“ Yes; till we meet in the Capitol of Rome ! ”

A slight tap was heard at the door; Nina regained in an instant her disguise.

“ It is on the stroke of midnight,” said the jailer, appearing at the threshold.

“ I come,” said Nina.

“ And thou hast to prepare thy thoughts,” she whispered to Rienzi. “ Arm all thy glorious intellect. Alas! is it again we part? How my heart sinks ! ”

The presence of the jailer at the threshold broke the bitterness of parting by abridging it. The false page pressed her lips on the prisoner’s hand, and left the cell.

The jailer, lingering behind for a moment, placed a parchment on the table. It was the summons from the court apporportioned for the trial of the Tribune.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCENT DOES NOT LIE. — THE PRIEST AND THE SOLDIER.

ON descending the stairs, Nina was met by Alvarez.

“ Fair page,” said the Spaniard, gayly, “ thy name, thou tellest me, is Villani, — Angelo Villani? Why, I know thy kinsman, methinks. Vouchsafe, young master, to enter this

chamber, and drink a night-cup to thy lady's health; I would fain learn tidings of my old friends."

"At another time," answered the false Angelo, drawing the cloak closer round her face; "it is late, — I am hurried."

"Nay," said the Spaniard, "you escape me not so easily;" and he caught firm hold of the page's shoulder.

"Unhand me, sir!" said Nina, haughtily, and almost weeping; for her strong nerves were yet unstrung. "Jailer, at thy peril, unbar the gates."

"So hot!" said Alvarez, surprised at so great a waste of dignity in a page, — "nay, I meant not to offend thee. May I wait on thy pageship to-morrow?"

"Ay, to-morrow," said Nina, eager to escape.

"And meanwhile," said Alvarez, "I will accompany thee home; we can confer by the way."

So saying, without regarding the protestations of the supposed page, he passed with Nina into the open air. "Your lady," said he, carelessly, "is wondrous fair; her lightest will is law to the greatest noble of Avignon. Methinks she is of Naples, — is it so? Art thou dumb, sweet youth?"

The page did not answer, but with a step so rapid that it almost put the slow Spaniard out of breath, hastened along the narrow space between the tower and the palace of the Signora Cesarini; nor could all the efforts of Alvarez draw forth a single syllable from his reluctant companion till they reached the gates of the palace, and he found himself discourteously left without the walls.

"A plague on the boy!" said he, biting his lips; "if the Cardinal thrive as well as his servant, by'r Lady, Monsignore is a happy man!"

By no means pleased with the prospect of an interview with Albornoz, who, like most able men, valued the talents of those he employed exactly in proportion to their success, the Spaniard slowly returned home. With the license accorded to him, he entered the Cardinal's chamber somewhat abruptly, and perceived him in earnest conversation with a Cavalier, whose long mustache, curled upward, and the bright cuirass worn underneath his mantle, seemed to betoken him of martial profession.

Pleased with the respite, Alvarez hastily withdrew; and in fact, the Cardinal's thoughts at that moment, and for that night, were bent upon other subjects than those of love.

The interruption served, however, to shorten the conversation between Albornozy and his guest. The latter rose.

"I think," said he, buckling on a short and broad rapier, which he had laid aside during the interview, — "I think, my Lord Cardinal, you encourage me to consider that our negotiation stands a fair chance of a prosperous close. Ten thousand florins, and my brother quits Viterbo and launches the thunderbolt of the Company on the lands of Rimini. On your part —"

"On my part it is agreed," said the Cardinal, "that the army of the Church interferes not with the course of your brother's arms; there is peace between us. One warrior understands another!"

"And the word of Giles d'Albornozy, son of the royal race of Aragon, is a guarantee for the faith of a Cardinal," replied the Cavalier, with a smile. "It is, my lord, in your *former* quality that we treat."

"There is my right hand," answered Albornozy, too politic to heed the insinuation. The Cavalier raised it respectfully to his lips, and his armed tread was soon heard descending the stairs.

"Victory," cried Albornozy, tossing his arms aloft, "victory, now thou art mine!"

With that he rose hastily, deposited his papers in an iron chest, and opening a concealed door behind the arras, entered a chamber that rather resembled a monk's cell than the apartment of a prince. Over a mean pallet hung a sword, a dagger, and a rude image of the Virgin. Without summoning Alvarez, the Cardinal unrobed, and in a few moments was asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

VAUCLUSE AND ITS GENIUS LOCI. — OLD ACQUAINTANCE
RENEWED.

THE next day at early noon the Cavalier, whom our last chapter presented to the reader, was seen mounted on a strong Norman horse, winding his way slowly along a green and pleasant path some miles from Avignon. At length he found himself in a wild and romantic valley, through which wandered that delightful river whose name the verse of Petrarch has given to so beloved a fame. Sheltered by rocks, and in this part winding through the greenest banks, enamelled with a thousand wild flowers and water-weeds, went the crystal Sorgia. Advancing farther, the landscape assumed a more sombre and sterile aspect. The valley seemed enclosed or shut in by fantastic rocks of a thousand shapes, down which dashed and glittered a thousand rivelets. And in the very wildest of the scene, the ground suddenly opened into a quaint and cultivated garden, through which, amidst a profusion of foliage, was seen a small and lonely mansion, — the hermitage of the place. The horseman was in the valley of the Vaucluse, and before his eye lay the garden and the house of PETRARCH! Carelessly, however, his eye scanned the consecrated spot, and unconsciously it rested for a moment upon a solitary figure seated musingly by the margin of the river. A large dog at the side of the noonday idler barked at the horseman as he rode on. "A brave animal and a deep bay!" thought the traveller; to him the dog seemed an object much more interesting than its master. And so — as the crowd of little men pass unheeding and unmoved those in whom Posterity shall acknowledge the landmarks of their age — the horseman turned his glance from the Poet!

Thrice blessed name! Immortal Florentine,¹ not as the

¹ I need scarcely say that it is his origin, not his actual birth, which entitles us to term Petrarch a Florentine.

lover, nor even as the poet, do I bow before thy consecrated memory, — venerating thee as one it were sacrilege to introduce in this unworthy page, save by name and as a shadow, — but as the first who ever asserted to people and to prince the august majesty of Letters; who claimed for Genius the prerogative to influence states, to control opinion, to hold an empire over the hearts of men, and prepare events by animating passion and guiding thought! What — though but feebly felt and dimly seen — what do we yet owe to thee if Knowledge be now a Power, if MIND be a Prophet and a Fate, foretelling and foredooming the things to come! From the greatest to the least of us to whom the pen is at once a sceptre and a sword, the low-born Florentine has been the arch-messenger to smooth the way and prepare the welcome. Yes, even the meanest of the after-comers — even he who now vents his gratitude — is thine everlasting debtor! Thine how largely is the honor if his labors, humble though they be, find an audience wherever literature is known, preaching in remotest lands the moral of forgotten revolutions, and scattering in the palace and the market-place the seeds that shall ripen into fruit when the hand of the sower shall be dust, and his very name perhaps be lost! For few, alas! are they whose *names* may outlive the grave, but the *thoughts* of every man who writes are made undying; others appropriate, advance, exalt them; and millions of minds unknown, undreamed of, are required to produce the immortality of one.

Indulging meditations very different from those which the idea of Petrarch awakens in a later time, the Cavalier pursued his path.

The valley was long left behind, and the way grew more and more faintly traced, until it terminated in a wood, through whose tangled boughs the sunlight broke playfully. At length the wood opened into a wide glade, from which rose a precipitous ascent, crowned with the ruins of an old castle. The traveller dismounted, led his horse up the ascent, and gaining the ruins, left his steed within one of the roofless chambers, overgrown with the longest grass and a profusion of wild shrubs; thence ascending, with some toil, a narrow and broken staircase,

he found himself in a small room less decayed than the rest, of which the roof and floor were yet whole.

Stretched on the ground in his cloak, and leaning his head thoughtfully on his hand, was a man of tall stature and middle age. He lifted himself on his arm with great alacrity as the Cavalier entered.

"Well, Brettone, I have counted the hours: what tidings?"

"Albornoz consents."

"Glad news! Thou givest me new life. *Par Dieu!* I shall breakfast all the better for this, my brother. Hast thou remembered that I am famishing?"

Brettone drew from beneath his cloak a sufficiently huge cask of wine, and a small panier tolerably well filled; the inmate of the tower threw himself upon the provant with great devotion; and both the soldiers, — for such they were, — stretched at length on the ground, regaled themselves with considerable zest, talking hastily and familiarly between every mouthful.

"I say, Brettone, thou playest unfairly, — thou hast already devoured more than half the pasty; push it hitherwards. And so the Cardinal consents! What manner of man is he? Able, as they say?"

"Quick, sharp, and earnest, with an eye of fire, few words, and comes to the point."

"Unlike a priest, then, — a good brigand spoilt. What hast thou heard of the force he heads? Ho! not so fast with the wine."

"Scanty at present. He relies on recruits throughout Italy."

"What his designs for Rome? There, my brother, there tends my secret soul! As for these petty towns and petty tyrants, I care not how they fall, or by whom. But the Pope must not return to Rome. Rome must be mine, — the city of a new empire, the conquest of a new Attila! There every circumstance combines in my favor; the absence of the Pope, the weakness of the middle class, the poverty of the populace, the imbecile though ferocious barbarism of the Barons, have long concurred to render Rome the most facile, while the most glorious conquest!"

"My brother, pray Heaven your ambition do not wreck you at last; you are ever losing sight of the land! Surely, with the immense wealth we are acquiring, we may —"

"Aspire to be something greater than Free Companions, — generals to-day, and adventurers to-morrow. Rememberest thou how the Norman sword won Sicily, and how the bastard William converted on the field of Hastings his baton into a sceptre? I tell thee, Brettone, that this loose Italy has crowns on the hedge that a dexterous hand may carry off at the point of the lance. My course is taken: I will form the fairest army in Italy, and with it I will win a throne in the Capitol. Fool that I was six years ago! Instead of deputing that mad dolt, Pepin of Minorbino, had I myself deserted the Hungarian, and repaired with my soldiery to Rome, the fall of Rienzi would have been followed by the rise of Montreal. Pepin was outwitted, and threw away the prey after he had hunted it down. The lion shall not again trust the chase to the jackal!"

"Walter, thou speakest of the fate of Rienzi: let it warn thee!"

"Rienzi," replied Montreal, "I know the man! In peaceful times, or with an honest people, he would have founded a great dynasty. But he dreamed of laws and liberty for men who despise the first and will not protect the last. We, of a harder race, know that a new throne must be built by the feudal, and not the civil, system; and into the city we must transport the camp. It is by the multitude that the proud Tribune gained power, — by the multitude he lost it; it is by the sword that I will win it, and by the sword will I keep it!"

"Rienzi was too cruel; he should not have incensed the Barons," said Brettone, about to finish the flask, when the strong hand of his brother plucked it from him and anticipated the design.

"Pooh!" said Montreal, finishing the draught with a long sigh, "he was not cruel enough. He sought only to be just, and not to distinguish between noble and peasant. He should have distinguished! He should have exterminated the nobles root and branch. But this no Italian can do. This is reserved for me."

"Thou wouldst not butcher all the best blood of Rome?"

"Butcher! No, but I would seize their lands, and endow with them a new nobility, — the hardy and fierce nobility of the North, who well know how to guard their prince, and *will* guard him as the fountain of their own power. Enough of this now! And talking of Rienzi, — rots he still in his dungeon?"

"Why, this morning, ere I left, I heard strange news. The town was astir, groups in every corner. They said that Rienzi's trial was to be to-day; and from the names of the judges chosen, it is suspected that acquittal is already determined on."

"Ha! thou shouldst have told me of this before."

"Should he be restored to Rome, would it militate against thy plans?"

"Humph! I know not; deep thought and dexterous management would be needed. I would fain not leave this spot till I hear what is decided on."

"Surely, Walter, it would have been wiser and safer to have stayed with thy soldiery, and intrusted me with the absolute conduct of this affair."

"Not so," answered Montreal; "thou art a bold fellow enough, and a cunning, but my head in these matters is better than thine. Besides," continued the Knight, lowering his voice and shading his face, "I had vowed a pilgrimage to the beloved river and the old trysting-place. Ah me! — But all this, Brettone, thou understandest not; let it pass. As for my safety, since we have come to this amnesty with Albornoz, I fear but little danger, even if discovered; besides, I want the florins. There are those in this country, Germans, who could eat an Italian army at a meal, whom I would fain engage, and their leaders want earnest-money, the griping knaves! How are the Cardinal's florins to be paid?"

"Half now; half when thy troops are before Rimini!"

"Rimini! the thought whets my sword. Rememberest thou how that accursed Malatesta drove me from Aversa,¹ broke up

¹ This Malatesta, a signior of illustrious family, was one of the most skilful warriors in Italy. He and his brother Galeotto had been raised to the joint

my camp, and made me render to him all my booty? There fell the work of years! But for that my banner now would be floating over St. Angelo. I will pay back the debt with fire and sword ere the summer has shed its leaves."

The fair countenance of Montreal grew terrible as he uttered these words, his hands griped the handle of his sword, and his strong frame heaved visibly, — tokens of the fierce and unsparing passions, by the aid of which a life of rapine and revenge had corrupted a nature originally full no less of the mercy than the courage of Provençal chivalry.

Such was the fearful man who now — the wildness of his youth sobered, and his ambition hardened and concentrated — was the rival with Rienzi for the mastery of Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROWD. — THE TRIAL. — THE VERDICT. — THE SOLDIER AND THE PAGE.

It was on the following evening that a considerable crowd had gathered in the streets of Avignon. It was the second day of the examination of Rienzi, and with every moment was expected the announcement of the verdict. Amongst the foreigners of all countries assembled in that seat of the Papal splendor, the interest was intense. The Italians, even of the highest rank, were in favor of the Tribune, the French against him. As for the good townspeople of Avignon themselves, they felt but little excitement in anything that did not bring money into their pockets; and if it had been put to the secret vote, no doubt there would have been a vast majority for burning the prisoner, as a marketable speculation.

Among the crowd was a tall man in a plain and rusty suit tyranny of Rimini by the voice of its citizens. After being long the foes of the Church, they were ultimately named as its captains by the Cardinal Albornoz.

of armor, but with an air of knightly bearing which somewhat belied the coarseness of his mail; he wore no helmet, but a small morion of black leather, with a long projecting shade, much used by wayfarers in the hot climates of the South. A black patch covered nearly the whole of one cheek, and altogether he bore the appearance of a grim soldier, with whom war had dealt harshly, both in purse and person.

Many were the jests at the shabby swordman's expense with which that lively population amused their impatience; and though the shade of the morion concealed his eyes, an arch and merry smile about the corners of his mouth showed that he could take a jest at himself.

"Well," said one of the crowd (a rich Milanese), "I am of a state that *was* free, and I trust the People's man will have justice shown him."

"Amen," said a grave Florentine.

"They say," whispered a young student from Paris, to a learned doctor of laws with whom he abode, "that his defence has been a masterpiece."

"He hath taken no degrees," replied the doctor, doubtfully. "Ho! friend, why dost thou push me so? Thou hast rent my robe."

This was said to a minstrel, or *jongleur*, who, with a small lute slung round him, was making his way, with great earnestness, through the throng.

"I beg pardon, worthy sir," said the minstrel; "but this is a scene to be sung of. Centuries hence—ay, and in lands remote—legend and song will tell the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, the friend of Petrarch and the Tribune of Rome!"

The young French student turned quickly round to the minstrel, with a glow on his pale face; not sharing the general sentiments of his countrymen against Rienzi, he felt that it was an era in the world when a minstrel spoke thus of the heroes of intellect—not of war.

At this time the tall soldier was tapped impatiently on the back.

"I pray thee, great sir," said a sharp and imperious voice, "to withdraw that tall bulk of thine a little on one side,—

I cannot see through thee; and I would fain my eyes were among the first to catch a glimpse of Rienzi as he passes from the court."

"Fair Sir page," replied the soldier, good-humoredly, as he made way for Angelo Villani, "thou wilt not always find that way in the world is won by commanding the strong. When thou art older thou wilt beard the weak, and the strong thou wilt wheedle."

"I must change my nature, then," answered Angelo (who was of somewhat small stature, and not yet come to his full growth), trying still to raise himself above the heads of the crowd.

The soldier looked at him approvingly; and as he looked he sighed, and his lips worked with some strange emotion.

"Thou speakest well," said he, after a pause. "Pardon me the rudeness of the question, but art thou of Italy? Thy tongue savors of the Roman dialect; yet I have seen lineaments like thine on this side the Alps."

"It may be, good fellow," said the page, haughtily; "but I thank Heaven that I am of Rome."

At this moment a loud shout burst from that part of the crowd nearest the court. The sound of trumpets again hushed the throng into deep and breathless silence, while the Pope's guards, ranged along the space conducting from the court, drew themselves up more erect, and fell a step or two back upon the crowd.

As the trumpets ceased, the voice of a herald was heard, but it did not penetrate within several yards of the spot where Angelo and the soldier stood; and it was only by a mighty shout, — that in a moment circled through and was echoed back by the wide multitude, — by the waving of kerchiefs from the windows, by broken ejaculations, which were caught up from lip to lip, that the page knew that Rienzi was acquitted.

"I would I could see his face!" sighed the page, querulously.

"And thou shalt," said the soldier; and he caught up the boy in his arms and pressed on with the strength of a giant,

parting the living stream from right to left as he took his way to a place near the guards, and by which Rienzi was sure to pass.

The page, half-pleased, half-indignant, struggled a little; but finding it in vain, consented tacitly to what he felt an outrage on his dignity.

"Never mind!" said the soldier; "thou art the first I ever willingly raised above myself, — and I do it now for the sake of thy fair face, which reminds me of one I loved."

But these last words were spoken low, and the boy, in his anxiety to see the hero of Rome, did not hear or heed them. Presently Rienzi came by: two gentlemen, of the Pope's own following, walked by his side. He moved slowly, amidst the greetings and clamor of the crowd, looking neither to the right nor left. His bearing was firm and collected, and save by the flush of his cheek, there was no external sign of joy or excitement. Flowers dropped from every balcony on his path; and just when he came to a broader space, where the ground was somewhat higher, and where he was in fuller view of the houses around, he paused, and uncovering, acknowledged the homage he had received, with a look, a gesture, which each who beheld never forgot. It haunted even that gay and thoughtless court when the last tale of Rienzi's life reached their ears. And Angelo, clinging then round that soldier's neck, recalled — But we must not anticipate.

It was not, however, to the dark tower that Rienzi returned. His home was prepared at the palace of the Cardinal d'Albornoz. The next day he was admitted to the Pope's presence, and on the evening of that day he was proclaimed Senator of Rome.

Meanwhile the soldier had placed Angelo on the ground; and as the page faltered out no courteous thanks, he interrupted him in a sad and kind voice, the tone of which struck the page forcibly, so little did it suit the rough and homely appearance of the man.

"We part," he said, "as strangers, fair boy; and since thou sayest thou art of Rome, there is no reason why my heart should have warmed to thee as it has done; yet if ever thou

wantest a friend, seek him"—and the soldier's voice sank into a whisper—"in Walter de Montreal."

Ere the page recovered his surprise at that redoubted name, which his earliest childhood had been taught to dread, the Knight of St. John had vanished amongst the crowd.

CHAPTER IX.

ALBORNOZ AND NINA.

BUT the eyes which, above all others, thirsted for a glimpse of the released captive were forbidden that delight. Alone in her chamber, Nina awaited the result of the trial. She heard the shouts, the exclamations, the tramp of thousands along the street; she felt that the victory was won; and, her heart long overcharged, she burst into passionate tears. The return of Angelo soon acquainted her with all that had passed; but it somewhat chilled her joy to find Rienzi was the guest of the dreaded Cardinal. That shock, in which certainty, however happy, replaces suspense, had so powerful an effect on her frame, joined to her loathing fear of a visit from the Cardinal, that she became for three days alarmingly ill; and it was only on the fifth day from that which saw Rienzi endowed with the rank of Senator of Rome, that she was recovered sufficiently to admit Albornoza to her presence.

The Cardinal had sent daily to inquire after her health, and his inquiries, to her alarmed mind, had appeared to insinuate a pretension to the right to make them. Meanwhile Albornoza had had enough to divert and occupy his thoughts. Having bought off the formidable Montreal from the service of John di Vico, one of the ablest and fiercest enemies of the Church, he resolved to march to the territories of that tyrant as expeditiously as possible, and so not to allow him time to obtain the assistance of any other band of the mercenary adventurers who found Italy the market for their valor. Occupied with

raising troops, procuring money, corresponding with the various free states, and establishing alliances in aid of his ulterior and more ambitious projects at the court of Avignon, the Cardinal waited with tolerable resignation the time when he might claim from the Signora Cesarini the reward to which he deemed himself entitled. Meanwhile he had held his first conversations with Rienzi, and, under the semblance of courtesy to the acquitted Tribune, Albornoz had received him as his guest, in order to make himself master of the character and disposition of one in whom he sought a minister and a tool. That miraculous and magic art, attested by the historians of the time, which Rienzi possessed over every one with whom he came into contact, however various in temper, station, or opinions, had not deserted him in his interview with the Pontiff. So faithfully had he described the true condition of Rome, so logically had he traced the causes and the remedies of the evils she endured, so sanguinely had he spoken of his own capacities for administering her affairs, and so brilliantly had he painted the prospects which that administration opened to the weal of the Church and the interests of the Pope, that Innocent, though a keen and shrewd and somewhat sceptical calculator of human chances, was entirely fascinated by the eloquence of the Roman.

"Is this the man," he is reported to have said, "whom for twelve months we have treated as a prisoner and a criminal? Would that it were on his shoulders only that the Christian empire reposed!"

At the close of the interview he had, with every mark of favor and distinction, conferred upon Rienzi the rank of Senator, — which, in fact, was that of Viceroy of Rome, — and had willingly acceded to all the projects which the enterprising Rienzi had once more formed, not only for recovering the territories of the Church, but for extending the dictatorial sway of the Seven-hilled City over the old dependencies of Italy.

Albornoz, to whom the Pope retailed this conversation, was somewhat jealous of the favor the new Senator had so suddenly acquired, and immediately on his return home sought an inter-

view with his guest. In his heart the Lord Cardinal, emphatically a man of action and business, regarded Rienzi as one rather cunning than wise, rather fortunate than great, a mixture of the pedant and the demagogue. But after a long and scrutinizing conversation with the new Senator, even he yielded to the spell of his enchanting and master intellect. Reluctantly Albornoz confessed to himself that Rienzi's rise was not the thing of chance; yet more reluctantly he perceived that the Senator was one whom he might treat with as an equal, but could not rule as a minion. And he entertained serious doubts whether it would be wise to reinstate him in a power which he evinced the capacity to wield and the genius to extend. Still, however, he did not repent the share he had taken in Rienzi's acquittal. His presence in a camp so thinly peopled was a matter greatly to be desired. And through his influence the Cardinal more than ever trusted to enlist the Romans in favor of his enterprise for the recovery of the territory of Saint Peter.

Rienzi, who panted once more to behold his Nina, endeared to him by trial and absence as by fresh bridals, was not however able to discover the name she had assumed at Avignon; and his residence with the Cardinal, closely but respectfully watched as he was, forbade Nina all opportunity of corresponding with him. Some half-bantering hints which Albornoz had dropped upon the interest taken in his welfare by the most celebrated beauty of Avignon, had filled him with a vague alarm, which he trembled to acknowledge even to himself. But the *volto sciolto*¹ which, in common with all Italian politicians, concealed whatever were his *pensieri stretti*, enabled him to baffle completely the jealous and lynx-like observation of the Cardinal. Nor had Alvarez been better enabled to satisfy the curiosity of his master. He had indeed sought the page Villani, but the imperious manner of that wayward and haughty boy had cut short all attempts at cross-examination; and all he could ascertain was that the real Angelo Villani was not the Angelo Villani who had visited Rienzi.

¹ *Volto sciolto, pensieri stretti*,—the countenance open, the thoughts restrained.

Trusting at last that he should learn all, and inflamed by such passion and such hope as he was capable of feeling, Albanoz now took his way to the Cesarini's palace.

He was ushered with due state into the apartment of the Signora. He found her pale, and with the traces of illness upon her noble and statue-like features. She rose as he entered; and when he approached, she half bent her knee and raised his hand to her lips. Surprised and delighted at a reception so new, the Cardinal hastened to prevent the condescension; retaining both her hands, he attempted gently to draw them to his heart.

"Fairest!" he whispered, "couldst thou know how I have mourned thy illness, — and yet it has but left thee more lovely, as the rain only brightens the flower. Ah! happy if I have promoted thy lightest wish, and if in thine eyes I may henceforth seek at once an angel to guide me and a paradise to reward."

Nina, releasing her hand, waved it gently, and motioned the Cardinal to a seat. Seating herself at a little distance, she then spoke with great gravity and downcast eyes.

"My lord, it is your intercession, joined to his own innocence, that has released from yonder tower the elected governor of the people of Rome. But freedom is the least of the generous gifts you have conferred: there is a greater in a fair name vindicated and rightful honors re-bestowed. For this, I rest ever your debtor; for this, if I bear children, they shall be taught to bless your name; for this, the historian who recalls the deeds of this age, and the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, shall add a new chaplet to the wreaths you have already won. Lord Cardinal, I may have erred; I may have offended you: you may accuse me of woman's artifice. Speak not, wonder not, hear me out. I have but one excuse when I say that I held justified any means, short of dishonor, to save the life and restore the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi. Know, my lord, that she who now addresses you is his wife."

The Cardinal remained motionless and silent. But his sallow countenance grew flushed from the brow to the neck, and his thin lips quivered for a moment, and then broke into a wither-

ing and bitter smile. At length he rose from his seat, very slowly, and said, in a voice trembling with passion, —

“It is well, madam! Giles d’Albornoz has been, then, a puppet in the hands, a stepping-stone in the rise, of the plebeian demagogue of Rome. You but played upon me for your own purposes; and nothing short of a Cardinal of Spain and a Prince of the royal blood of Aragon was meet to be the instrument of a mountebank’s juggle! Madam, yourself and your husband might justly be accused of ambition —”

“Cease, my lord!” said Nina, with unspeakable dignity; “whatever offence has been committed against you was mine alone. Till after our last interview, Rienzi knew not even of my presence at Avignon.”

“At our last interview, lady (you do well to recall it!), methinks there was a hinted and implied contract. I have fulfilled my part, — I claim yours. Mark me, I do not forego that claim! As easily as I rend this glove can I rend the parchment which proclaims thy husband ‘the Senator of Rome.’ The dungeon is not death, and its door will open *twice*.”

“My lord, my lord!” cried Nina, sick with terror, “wrong not so your noble nature, your great name, your sacred rank, your chivalric blood. You are of the knightly race of Spain; yours not the sullen, low, and inexorable vices that stain the petty tyrants of this unhappy land. You are no Visconti, no Castracani; you cannot stain your laurels with revenge upon a woman. Hear me,” she continued, and she fell abruptly at his feet. “Men dupe, deceive our sex, and for selfish purposes; they are pardoned, even by their victims. Did I deceive you with a false hope? Well, what my object; what my excuse? My husband’s liberty; my land’s salvation! Woman — my lord, alas! your sex too rarely understand her weakness or her greatness! Erring — all human as she is to others, God gifts her with a thousand virtues to the one she loves! It is from that love that she alone drinks her nobler nature. For the hero of her worship she has the meekness of the dove, the devotion of the saint; for his safety in peril, for his rescue in misfortune, her vain sense imbibes the sagacity of the serpent, her weak heart the courage of the lioness! It

is this which, in absence, made me mask my face in smiles, that the friends of the houseless exile might not despair of his fate; it is this which brought me through forests beset with robbers, to watch the stars upon yon solitary tower; it was this which led my steps to the revels of your hated court,—this which made me seek a deliverer in the noblest of its chiefs; it is this which has at last opened the dungeon door to the prisoner now within your halls; and this, Lord Cardinal," added Nina, rising, and folding her arms upon her heart, "this, if your anger seeks a victim, will inspire me to die, without a groan, but without dishonor!"

Albornoz remained rooted to the ground, amazement, emotion, admiration, all busy at his heart. He gazed at Nina's flashing eyes and heaving bosom as a warrior of old upon a prophetess inspired; his eyes were riveted to hers as by a spell. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. Nina continued:

"Yes, my lord, these are no idle words! If you seek revenge, it is in your power. Undo what you have done. Give Rienzi back to the dungeon, or to disgrace, and you are avenged. But not on *him*. All the hearts of Italy shall become to him a second Nina! I am the guilty one, and I the sufferer. Hear me swear: in that instant which sees new wrong to Rienzi, this hand is my executioner! My lord, I supplicate you no longer!"

Albornoz continued deeply moved. Nina but rightly judged him when she distinguished the aspiring Spaniard from the barbarous and unrelenting voluptuaries of Italy. Despite the profligacy that stained his sacred robe; despite all the acquired and increasing callousness of a hard, scheming, and sceptical man, cast amidst the worst natures of the worst of times,—there lingered yet in his soul much of the knightly honor of his race and country. High thoughts and daring spirits touched a congenial string in his heart, and not the less in that he had but rarely met them in his experience of camps and courts. For the first time in his life he felt that he had seen the woman who could have contented him even with wedlock, and taught him the proud and faithful love of which the minstrels of Spain had sung. He sighed, and still gazing on Nina,

approached her, almost reverentially; he knelt, and kissed the hem of her robe. "Lady," he said, "I would I could believe that you have altogether read my nature aright; but I were indeed lost to all honor, and unworthy of gentle birth, if I still harbored a single thought against the peace and virtue of one like thee. Sweet heroine," he continued, "so lovely, yet so pure, so haughty, and yet so soft, thou hast opened to me the brightest page these eyes have ever scanned in the blotted volume of mankind. Mayest thou have such happiness as life can give! But souls such as thine make their nest, like the eagle, upon rocks and amidst the storms. Fear me no more, think of me no more, — unless hereafter, when thou hearest men speak of Giles d'Albornoz, thou mayest say in thine own heart," and here the Cardinal's lip curled with scorn, "he did not renounce every feeling worthy of a man when Ambition and Fate endued him with the surplice of the priest."

The Spaniard was gone before Nina could reply.

BOOK VIII.

THE GRAND COMPANY.

MONTREAL nourrissoit de plus vastes projets; . . . il donnoit à sa compagnie un gouvernement régulier. . . . Par cette discipline il faisoit régner l'abondance dans son camp: les gens de guerre ne parloient, en Italie, que des richesses qu'on acquéroit à son service.—SISMONDI, *Hist. des Républiques Italiennes*, tom. vi. c. 42.

Montreal cherished more vast designs; . . . he subjected his company to a regular system of government. . . . By means of this discipline he kept his camp abundantly supplied, and military adventurers in Italy talked of nothing but the wealth won in his service.—SISMONDI'S *Hist. of Ital. Republics*.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENCAMPMENT.

It was a most lovely day, in the very glow and meridian of an Italian summer, when a small band of horsemen were seen winding a hill which commanded one of the fairest landscapes of Tuscany. At their head was a Cavalier in a complete suit of chain armor, the links of which were so fine that they resembled a delicate and curious network, but so strongly compacted that they would have resisted spear or sword no less effectually than the heaviest corselet, while adapting themselves exactly and with ease to every movement of the light and graceful shape of the rider. He wore a hat of dark-green velvet shaded by long plumes, while of two squires behind, the one bore his helmet and lance, the other led a strong war-horse, completely cased in plates of mail, which seemed, however, scarcely to encumber its proud and agile paces. The countenance of the Cavalier was comely, but strongly marked,

and darkened, by long exposure to the suns of many climes, to a deep bronze hue ; a few raven ringlets escaped from beneath his hat down a cheek closely shaven. The expression of his features was grave and composed even to sadness ; nor could all the loveliness of the unrivalled scene before him dispel the quiet and settled melancholy of his eyes. Besides the squires, ten horsemen, armed *cap-à-pie*, attended the knight ; and the low and murmured conversation they carried on at intervals, as well as their long fair hair, large stature, thick, short beards, and the studied and accurate equipment of their arms and steeds, bespoke them of a hardier and more warlike race than the children of the South. The cavalcade was closed with a man, almost of gigantic height, bearing a banner richly decorated, wherein was wrought a column, with the inscription, "ALONE AMIDST RUINS." Fair indeed was the prospect, which with every step expanded yet more widely its various beauty. Right before stretched a long vale, now covered with green woodlands glittering in the yellow sunlight, now opening into narrow plains bordered by hillocks, from whose mosses of all hues grew fantastic and odorous shrubs ; while, winding amidst them, a broad and silver stream broke into light at frequent intervals, snatched by wood and hillock from the eye, only to steal upon it again in sudden and bright surprise. The opposite slope of gentle mountains, as well as that which the horsemen now descended, was covered with vineyards, trained in alleys and arcades ; and the clustering grape laughed from every leafy and glossy covert as gayly as when the Fauns held a holiday in the shade. The eye of the Cavalier roved listlessly over this enchanting prospect, sleeping in the rosiest light of a Tuscan heaven, and then became fixed with a more earnest attention on the gray and frowning walls of a distant castle which, high upon the steepest of the opposite mountains, overlooked the valley.

"Behold," he muttered to himself, "how every Eden in Italy hath its curse ! Wherever the land smiles fairest, be sure to find the brigand's tent and the tyrant's castle !"

Scarce had these thoughts passed his mind ere the shrill and sudden blast of a bugle, that sounded close amongst the

vineyards by the side of the path, startled the whole group. The cavalcade halted abruptly. The leader made a gesture to the squire who led his war-horse. The noble and practised animal remained perfectly still, save by champing its bit restlessly, and moving its quick ear to and fro, as aware of a coming danger, while the squire, unencumbered by the heavy armor of the Germans, plunged into the thicket and disappeared. He returned in a few minutes, already heated and breathless.

"We must be on our guard," he whispered; "I see the glimmer of steel through the vine-leaves."

"Our ground is unhappily chosen," said the Knight, hastily bracing on his helmet and leaping on his charger; and waving his hand towards a broader space in the road, which would permit the horsemen more room to act in union, with his small band he made hastily to the spot, the armor of the soldiers rattling heavily as two by two they proceeded on.

The space to which the Cavalier had pointed was a green semicircle of several yards in extent, backed by tangled copses of brushwood sloping down to the vale below. They reached it in safety; they drew up, breast to breast, in the form of a crescent, every visor closed save that of the Knight, who looked anxiously and keenly round the landscape.

"Hast thou heard, Giulio," he said to his favorite squire (the only Italian of the band), "whether any brigands have been seen lately in these parts?"

"No, my lord; on the contrary, I am told that every lance hath left the country to join the Grand Company of Fra Moreale. The love of his pay and plunder has drawn away the mercenaries of every Tuscan signor."

As he ceased speaking, the bugle sounded again from nearly the same spot as before; it was answered by a brief and martial note from the very rear of the horsemen. At the same moment, from the thickets behind broke the gleam of mail and spears. One after another, rank after rank, from the copse behind them, emerged men-at-arms, while suddenly, from the vines in front, still greater numbers poured forth with loud and fierce shouts.

"For God, for the Emperor, and for the Colonna!" cried the Knight, closing his visor; and the little band, closely serried, the lance in every rest, broke upon the rush of the enemy in front. A score or so, borne to the ground by the charge, cleared a path for the horsemen, and without waiting the assault of the rest, the Knight wheeled his charger and led the way down the hill, almost at full gallop, despite the roughness of the descent: a flight of arrows despatched after them fell idly on their iron mail.

"If they have no horse," cried the Knight, "we are saved!"

And indeed the enemy seemed scarcely to think of pursuing them, but, gathered on the brow of a hill, appeared contented to watch their flight.

Suddenly a curve in the road brought them before a broad and wide patch of waste land, which formed almost a level surface, interrupting the descent of the mountain. On the commencement of this waste, drawn up in still array, the sunlight broke on the breastplates of a long line of horsemen, whom the sinuosities of the road had hitherto concealed from the Knight and his party.

The little troop halted abruptly, retreat, advance, alike cut off; gazing first at the foe before them, that remained still as a cloud, every eye was then turned towards the Knight.

"An thou wouldst, my lord," said the leader of the Northmen, perceiving the irresolution of their chief, "we will fight to the last. You are the only Italian I ever knew whom I would willingly die for!"

This rude profession was received with a sympathetic murmur from the rest, and the soldiers drew closer around the Knight. "Nay, my brave fellows," said the Colonna, lifting his visor, "it is not in so inglorious a field, after such various fortunes, that we are doomed to perish. If these be brigands, as we must suppose, we can yet purchase our way. If the troops of some signor, we are strangers to the feud in which he is engaged. Give me yon banner; I will ride on to them."

"Nay, my lord," said Giulio; "such marauders do not always spare a flag of truce. There is danger —"

"For that reason your leader braves it. Quick!"

The Knight took the banner, and rode deliberately up to the horsemen. On approaching, his warlike eye could not but admire the perfect caparison of their arms, the strength and beauty of their steeds, and the steady discipline of their long and glittering line.

As he rode up, and his gorgeous banner gleamed in the noonlight, the soldiers saluted him. It was a good omen, and he hailed it as such. "Fair sirs," said the Knight, "I come, at once herald and leader of the little band who have just escaped the unlooked-for assault of armed men on yonder hill, and claiming aid, as knight from knight and soldier from soldier, I place my troop under the protection of your leader. Suffer me to see him."

"Sir Knight," answered one, who seemed the captain of the band, "sorry am I to detain one of your gallant bearing, and still more so on recognizing the device of one of the most potent houses of Italy. But our orders are strict, and we must bring all armed men to the camp of our General."

"Long absent from my native land, I knew not," replied the Knight, "that there was war in Tuscany. Permit me to crave the name of the General whom ye speak of, and that of the foe against whom ye march."

The Captain smiled slightly.

"Walter de Montreal is the General of the Grand Company, and Florence his present foe."

"We have fallen, then, into friendly, if fierce, hands," replied the Knight, after a moment's pause. "To Sir Walter de Montreal I am known of old. Permit me to return to my companions and acquaint them that if accident has made us prisoners, it is at least only to the most skilful warrior of his day that we are condemned to yield."

The Italian then turned his horse to join his comrades.

"A fair knight and a bold presence," said the Captain of the Companions to his neighbor, "though I scarce think it is the party we are ordered to intercept. Praised be the Virgin,

however, his men seem from the North! Them, perhaps, we may hope to enlist."

The Knight now, with his comrades, rejoined the troop. And on receiving their parole not to attempt escape, a detachment of thirty horsemen were despatched to conduct the prisoners to the encampment of the Grand Company.

Turning from the main road, the Knight found himself conducted into a narrow defile between the hills, which, succeeded by a gloomy tract of wild forest-land, brought the party at length into a full and abrupt view of a wide plain, covered with the tents of what, for Italian warfare, was considered a mighty army. A stream, over which rude and hasty bridges had been formed from the neighboring timber, alone separated the horsemen from the encampment.

"A noble sight!" said the captive Cavalier, with enthusiasm, as he reined in his steed and gazed upon the wild and warlike streets of canvas traversing each other in vistas broad and regular.

One of the captains of the Grand Company who rode beside him smiled complacently.

"There are few masters of the martial art who equal Fra Moreale," said he; "and savage, reckless, and gathered from all parts and all countries — from cavern and from marketplace, from prison and from palace — as are his troops, he has reduced them already into a discipline which might shame even the soldiery of the Empire."

The Knight made no reply, but spurring his horse over one of the rugged bridges, soon found himself amidst the encampment. But that part at which he entered, little merited the praises bestowed upon the discipline of the army. A more unruly and disorderly array, the Cavalier, accustomed to the stern regularity of English, French, and German discipline, thought he had never beheld. Here and there, fierce, unshaven, half-naked brigands might be seen, driving before them the cattle which they had just collected by predatory excursions. Sometimes a knot of dissolute women stood — chattering, scolding, gesticulating — collected round groups of wild shagged Northmen, who, despite the bright purity of the

summer-noon, were already engaged in deep potations. Oaths and laughter, and drunken merriment and fierce brawl, rang from side to side; and ever and anon some hasty conflict with drawn knives was begun and finished by the fiery bravoës of Calabria or the Apennines, before the very eyes and almost in the very path of the troop. Tumblers and mountebanks and jugglers and Jew peddlers were exhibiting their tricks or their wares at every interval, apparently well inured to the lawless and turbulent market in which they exercised their several callings. Despite the protection of the horsemen who accompanied them, the prisoners were not allowed to pass without molestation. Groups of urchins, squalid, fierce, and ragged, seemed to start from the ground, and surrounded their horses like swarms of bees, uttering the most discordant cries, and with the gesture of savages rather demanding than beseeching money, which when granted, seemed only to render them more insatiable; while, sometimes mingled with the rest, were seen the bright eyes and olive cheek, and half-pleading, half-laughing smile of girls, whose extreme youth, scarce emerged from childhood, rendered doubly striking their utter and unredeemed abandonment.

"You did not exaggerate the decorum of the Grand Company!" cried the Knight, gravely, to his new acquaintance.

"Signor," replied the other, "you must not judge of the kernel by the shell. We are scarcely yet arrived at the camp. These are the outskirts, occupied rather by the rabble than the soldiers. Twenty thousand men, from the sink, it must be owned, of every town in Italy, follow the camp, to fight if necessary, but rather for plunder and for forage: such you now behold. Presently you will see those of another stamp."

The Knight's heart swelled high. "And to such men is Italy given up!" thought he. His reverie was broken by a loud burst of applause from some convivialists hard by. He turned, and under a long tent, and round a board covered with wine and viands, sat some thirty or forty bravoës. A ragged minstrel, or *jongleur*, with an immense beard and mustachios, was tuning, with no inconsiderable skill, a lute which had

accompanied him in all his wanderings; and suddenly changing its notes into a wild and warlike melody, he commenced in a loud and deep voice the following song : —

THE PRAISE OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

1.

Ho ! dark one from the golden South,
 Ho ! fair one from the North,
 Ho ! coat of mail and spear of sheen,
 Ho ! wherefore ride ye forth ?
 " We come from mount, we come from cave,
 We come across the sea,
 In long array, in bright array,
 To Montreal's Companiè."
 Oh, the merry, merry band,
 Light heart and heavy hand,
 Oh, the Lances of the Free !

2.

Ho ! princes of the castled height,
 Ho ! burghers of the town, —
 Apulia's strength, Romagna's pride,
 And Tusca's old renown, —
 Why quail ye thus ? why pale ye thus ?
 What spectre do ye see ?
 " The blood-red flag and trampling march
 Of Montreal's Companiè !"
 Oh, the sunshine of your life,
 Oh, the thunders of your strife,
 Wild Lances of the Free !

3.

Ho ! scutcheons o'er the vaulted tomb
 Where Norman valor sleeps,
 Why shake ye so ? why quake ye so ?
 What wind the trophy sweeps ?
 " We shake without a breath ; below,
 The dead are stirr'd to see
 The Norman's fame revived again
 In Montreal's Companiè."
 Since Roger won his crown,
 Who hath equall'd your renown,
 Brave Lances of the Free ?

4.

Ho ! ye who seek to win a name,
 Where deeds are bravest done ;
 Ho ! ye who wish to pile a heap,
 Where gold is lightest won ;
 Ho ! ye who loathe the stagnant life,
 Or shun the law's decree,
 Belt on the brand and spur the steed,
 To Montreal's Companiè.
 And the maid shall share her rest,
 And the miser share his chest,
 With the Lances of the Free !
 The Free !
 The Free !
 Oh, the Lances of the Free !

Then suddenly, as if inspired to a wilder flight by his own minstrelsy, the *jongleur*, sweeping his hand over the chords, broke forth into an air admirably expressive of the picture which his words, running into a rude, but lively and stirring doggerel, attempted to paint.

THE MARCH OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

Tirà, tira-là, trumpet and drum !
 Rising bright o'er the height of the mountain they come,
 German and Hun and the Islandrie
 Who routed the Frenchman at famed Cressiè.
 When the rose changed its hue with the *fleur-de-lis* ;
 With the Roman and Lombard and Piedmontese,
 And the dark-haired son of the southern seas !
 Tirà, tira-là ! more near and near
 Down the steep, — see them sweep, — rank by rank they appear
 With the Cloud of the Crowd hanging dark at their rear,
 Serried and steadied and orderliè,
 Like the course — like the force — of a marching sea !
 Open your gates and out with your gold,
 For the blood must be spilt, or the ransom be told !
 Woe, Burghers, woe ! Behold them led
 By the stoutest arm and the wisest head,
 With the snow-white cross on the cloth of red ;
 With the eagle eye and the lion port,
 His barb for a throne, and his camp for a court !

Sovereign and scourge of the land is he, —
The kingly Knight of the Companiè !
Hurrah — hurrah — hurrah !
Hurrah for the army — hurrah for its lord —
Hurrah for the gold that is got by the sword —
Hurrah — hurrah — hurrah !
For the Lances of the Free !

Shouted by the full chorus of those desperate boon-companions, and caught up and re-echoed from side to side, near and far, as the familiar and well-known words of the burden reached the ears of more distant groups or stragglers, the effect of this fierce and licentious minstrelsy was indescribable. It was impossible not to feel the zest which that daring life imparted to its daring followers, and even the gallant and stately Knight who listened to it reproved himself for an involuntary thrill of sympathy and pleasure.

He turned with some impatience and irritation to his companion, who had taken a part in the chorus, and said : “ Sir, to the ears of an Italian noble, conscious of the miseries of his country, this ditty is not welcome. I pray you, let us proceed.”

“ I humbly crave your pardon, Signor,” said the Free Companion ; “ but really so attractive is the life led by Free Lances under Fra Moreale that sometimes we forget the — But pardon me, we will on.”

A few moments more, and bounding over a narrow circumvallation, the party found themselves in a quarter, animated indeed, but of a wholly different character of animation. Long lines of armed men were drawn up on either side of a path conducting to a large marquee, placed upon a little hillock, surmounted by a blue flag, and up this path armed soldiers were passing to and fro with great order, but with a pleased and complacent expression upon their swarthy features. Some that repaired to the marquee were bearing packets and bales upon their shoulders ; those that returned seemed to have got rid of their burdens, but every now and then, impatiently opening their hands, appeared counting and recounting to themselves the coins contained therein.

The Knight looked inquiringly at his companion.

"It is the marquee of the merchants," said the captain; "they have free admission to the camp, and their property and persons are rigidly respected. They purchase each soldier's share of the plunder at fair prices, and either party is contented with the bargain."

"It seems, then, that there is some kind of rude justice observed amongst you," said the Knight.

"Rude! *Diavolo!* Not a town in Italy but would be glad of such even justice and such impartial laws. Yonder lie the tents of the judges, appointed to try all offences of soldier against soldier. To the right, the tent with the golden ball contains the treasurer of the army. Fra Moreale incurs no arrears with his soldiery."

It was, indeed, by these means that the Knight of St. John had collected the best-equipped and the best-contented force in Italy. Every day brought him recruits. Nothing was spoken of amongst the mercenaries of Italy but the wealth acquired in his service, and every warrior in the pay of Republic or of Tyrant sighed for the lawless standard of Fra Moreale. Already had exaggerated tales of the fortunes to be made in the ranks of the Great Company passed the Alps; and, even now, the Knight, penetrating farther into the camp, beheld from many a tent the proud banners and armorial blazon of German nobility and Gallic knighthood.

"You see," said the Free Companion, pointing to these insignia, "we are not without our different ranks in our wild city. And while we speak, many a golden spur is speeding hitherward from the North!"

All now in the quarter they had entered was still and solemn; only afar came the mingled hum or the sudden shout of the pandemonium in the rear, mellowed by distance to a not unpleasing sound. An occasional soldier, crossing their path, stalked silently and stealthily to some neighboring tent, and seemed scarcely to regard their approach.

"Behold! we are before the General's pavilion," said the Free Lance.

Blazoned with purple and gold, the tent of Montreal lay a

little apart from the rest. A brooklet from the stream they had crossed murmured gratefully on the ear, and a tall and wide-spreading beech cast its shadow over the gorgeous canvas.

While his troop waited without, the Knight was conducted at once to the presence of the formidable adventurer.

CHAPTER II.

ADRIAN ONCE MORE THE GUEST OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL was sitting at the head of a table, surrounded by men, some military, some civil, whom he called his councillors, and with whom he apparently debated all his projects. These men, drawn from various cities, were intimately acquainted with the internal affairs of the several states to which they belonged. They could tell to a fraction the force of a signor, the wealth of a merchant, the power of a mob. And thus, in his lawless camp, Montreal presided, not more as a general than a statesman. Such knowledge was invaluable to the chief of the Great Company. It enabled him to calculate exactly the time to attack a foe, and the sum to demand for a suppression of hostilities. He knew what parties to deal with, where to importune, where to forbear. And it usually happened that, by some secret intrigue, the appearance of Montreal's banner before the walls of a city was the signal for some sedition or some broil within. It may be that he thus also promoted an ulterior, as well as his present, policy.

The divan were in full consultation when an officer entered, and whispered a few words in Montreal's ear. His eyes brightened. "Admit him," he said hastily. "Messires," he added to his councillors, rubbing his hands, "I think our net has caught our bird. Let us see."

At this moment the drapery was lifted and the Knight admitted.

"How!" muttered Montreal, changing color, and in evident disappointment. "Am I to be ever thus balked?"

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said the prisoner, "I am once more your guest. In these altered features you perhaps scarcely recognize Adrian di Castello."

"Pardon me, noble Signor," said Montreal, rising with great courtesy; "the mistake of my varlets disturbed my recollection for a moment. I rejoice once more to press a hand that has won so many laurels since last we parted. Your renown has been grateful to my ears. Ho!" continued the chieftain, clapping his hands, "see to the refreshment and repose of this noble Cavalier and his attendants. Lord Adrian, I will join you presently."

Adrian withdrew. Montreal, forgetful of his councillors, traversed his tent with hasty strides; then summoning the officer who had admitted Adrian, he said, "Count Landau still keeps the pass?"

"Yes, General!"

"Hie thee fast back, then,—the ambuscade must tarry till nightfall. We have trapped the wrong fox."

The officer departed, and shortly afterwards Montreal broke up the divan. He sought Adrian, who was lodged in a tent beside his own.

"My lord," said Montreal, "it is true that my men had orders to stop every one on the roads towards Florence. I am at war with that city. Yet I expected a very different prisoner from you. Need I add that you and your men are free?"

"I accept the courtesy, noble Montreal, as frankly as it is rendered. May I hope hereafter to repay it? Meanwhile permit me, without any disrespect, to say that had I learned the Grand Company was in this direction, I should have altered my course. I had heard that your arms were bent (somewhat, to my mind, more nobly) against Malatesta, the tyrant of Rimini!"

"They were so. He *was* my foe; he *is* my tributary. We conquered him. He paid us the price of his liberty. We marched by Asciano upon Sienna. For sixteen thousand florins we spared that city; and we now hang like a thunderbolt over

Florence, which dared to send her puny aid to the defence of Rimini. Our marches are forced and rapid, and our camp in this plain but just pitched."

"I hear that the Grand Company is allied with Albornoç, and that its General is secretly the soldier of the Church. Is it so?"

"Ay, Albornoç and I understand one another," replied Montreal, carelessly; "and not the less so that we have a mutual foe, whom both are sworn to crush, in Visconti, the Archbishop of Milan."

"Visconti! the most potent of the Italian princes. That he has justly incurred the wrath of the Church, I know, and I can readily understand that Innocent has revoked the pardon which the intrigues of the Archbishop purchased from Clement VI. But I do not see clearly why Montreal should willingly provoke so dark and terrible a foe."

Montreal smiled sternly. "Know you not," he said, "the vast ambition of that Visconti? By the Holy Sepulchre, he is precisely the enemy my soul leaps to meet! He has a genius worthy to cope with Montreal's. I have made myself master of his secret plans, — they are gigantic! In a word, the Archbishop designs the conquest of all Italy. His enormous wealth purchases the corrupt, his dark sagacity ensnares the credulous, his daring valor awes the weak. Every enemy he humbles, every ally he enslaves. This is precisely the Prince whose progress Walter de Montreal must arrest. For this," he said in a whisper, as to himself, "is precisely the Prince who, if suffered to extend his power, will frustrate the plans and break the force of Walter de Montreal."

Adrian was silent, and for the first time a suspicion of the real nature of the Provençal's designs crossed his breast.

"But, noble Montreal," resumed the Colonna, "give me, if your knowledge serves, as no doubt it does, — give me the latest tidings of my native city. I am Roman, and Rome is ever in my thoughts."

"And well she may," replied Montreal, quickly. "Thou knowest that Albornoç, as Legate of the Pontiff, led the army of the Church into the Papal Territories. He took with him

Cola di Rienzi. Arrived at Monte Fiascone, crowds of Romans of all ranks hastened thither to render homage to the Tribune. The Legate was forgotten in the popularity of his companion. Whether or not Albornoz grew jealous—for he is proud as Lucifer—of the respect paid to the Tribune, or whether he feared the restoration of his power, I cannot tell; but he detained him in his camp, and refused to yield him to all the solicitations and all the deputations of the Romans. Artfully, however, he fulfilled one of the real objects of Rienzi's release. Through his means he formally regained the allegiance of Rome to the Church, and by the attraction of his presence swelled his camp with Roman recruits. Marching to Viterbo, Rienzi distinguished himself greatly in deeds of arms against the tyrant¹ John di Vico. Nay, he fought as one worthy of belonging to the Grand Company. This increased the zeal of the Romans; and the city disgorged half its inhabitants to attend the person of the bold Tribune. To the entreaties of these worthy citizens (perhaps the very men who had before shut up their darling in St. Angelo) the crafty Legate merely replied, 'Arm against John di Vico, conquer the tyrants of the Territory, re-establish the patrimony of Saint Peter, and Rienzi shall then be proclaimed Senator, and return to Rome.'

"These words inspired the Romans with so great a zeal that they willingly lent their aid to the Legate. Aquapendente, Bolzena, yielded, John di Vico was half reduced and half terrified into submission, and Gabrielli, the tyrant of Agobbio, has since succumbed. The glory is to the Cardinal, but the merit with Rienzi."

"And now?"

"Albornoz continued to entertain the Senator-Tribune with great splendor and fair words, but not a word about restoring him to Rome. Wearied with this suspense, I have learned by secret intelligence that Rienzi has left the camp and betaken himself with a few attendants to Florence, where he has friends who will provide him with arms and money to enter Rome."

¹ Vita di Cola di Rienzi.

"Ah, then! now I guess," said Adrian, with a half smile, "for whom I was mistaken!"

Montreal blushed slightly. "Fairly conjectured!" said he.

"Meanwhile, at Rome," continued the Provençal, "at Rome, your worthy House and that of the Orsini, being elected to the supreme power, quarrelled among themselves, and could not keep the authority they had won. Francesco Baroncelli,¹ a new demagogue, a humble imitator of Rienzi, rose upon the ruins of the peace broken by the nobles, obtained the title of Tribune, and carried about the very insignia used by his predecessor. But less wise than Rienzi, he took the anti-papal party; and the Legate was thus enabled to play the papal demagogue against the usurper. Baroncelli was a weak man; his sons committed every excess, in mimicry of the high-born tyrants of Padua and Milan. Virgins violated and matrons dishonored, somewhat contrasted the solemn and majestic decorum of Rienzi's rule, — in fine, Baroncelli fell, massacred by the people. And now, if you ask what rules Rome, I answer, 'It is the hope of Rienzi.'"

¹ This Baroncelli, who has been introduced to the reader in a former portion of this work, is called by Matteo Villani "a man of vile birth and little learning; he had been a Notary of the Capitol."

In the midst of the armed dissensions between the Barons, which followed the expulsion of Rienzi, Baroncelli contrived to make himself master of the Capitol, and of what was considered an auxiliary of no common importance; namely, the *Great Bell*, by whose alarum Rienzi had so often summoned to arms the Roman people. Baroncelli was crowned Tribune, clothed in a robe of gold brocade, and invested with the crozier-sceptre of Rienzi. At first, his cruelty against the great took the appearance of protection to the humble; but the excesses of his sons (not exaggerated in the text), and his own brutal but bold ferocity, soon made him execrated by the people, to whom he owed his elevation. He had the folly to declare against the Pope; and this it really was that mainly induced Innocent to restore, and oppose to their new demagogue, the former and more illustrious Tribune. Baroncelli, like Rienzi, was excommunicated; and in his instance, also, the curse of the Church was the immediate cause of his downfall. In attempting flight he was massacred by the mob, December, 1353. Some, however, have maintained that he was slain in combat with Rienzi; and others, by a confusion of dates, have made him succeed to Rienzi on the death of the latter. (Matteo Villani, lib. iii. cap. 78; Osservaz. Stor. di Zefrino Re. MS. Vat. dal Bzovio, ann. 1353. N. 2.)

"A strange man, and various fortunes. What will be the end of both?"

"Swift murder to the first, and eternal fame to the last," answered Montreal, calmly. "Rienzi will be restored; that brave phoenix will wing its way, through storm and cloud, to its own funeral pyre: I foresee, I compassionate, I admire. And then," added Montreal, "I look *beyond*!"

"But wherefore feel you so certain that, if restored, Rienzi must fall?"

"Is it not clear to every eye, save his whom ambition blinds? How can mortal genius, however great, rule that most depraved people by popular means? The Barons (you know their indomitable ferocity), wedded to abuse, and loathing every semblance to law, — the Barons, humbled for a moment, will watch their occasion, and rise. The people will again desert. Or else, grown wise in one respect by experience, the new Senator will see that popular favor has a loud voice, but a recreant arm. He will, like the Barons, surround himself by foreign swords. A detachment from the Grand Company will be his courtiers; they will be his masters! To pay them the people must be taxed. Then the idol is execrated. No Italian hand can govern these hardy demons of the North; they will mutiny and fall away. A new demagogue will lead on the people, and Rienzi will be the victim. Mark my prophecy!"

"And then the 'beyond' to which you look?"

"Utter prostration of Rome for new and long ages, — God makes not two Rienzis; *or*," said Montreal, proudly, "the infusion of a new life into the worn-out and diseased frame, — the foundation of a new dynasty. Verily, when I look around me, I believe that the Ruler of nations designs the restoration of the South by the irruptions of the North, and that out of the old Franc and Germanic race will be built up the thrones of the future world!"

As Montreal thus spoke, leaning on his great war-sword, with his fair and heroic features, — so different, in their frank, bold, fearless expression, from the dark and wily intellect that characterizes the lineaments of the South, — eloquent at once with enthusiasm and thought, he might have seemed no unfitting

representative of the genius of that Northern chivalry of which he spake. And Adrian half fancied that he saw before him one of the old Gothic scourges of the Western World.

Their conversation was here interrupted by the sound of a trumpet, and presently an officer, entering, announced the arrival of ambassadors from Florence.

"Again you must pardon me, noble Adrian," said Montreal, "and let me claim you as my guest at least for to-night. Here you may rest secure, and on parting, my men shall attend you to the frontiers of whatsoever territory you design to visit."

Adrian, not sorry to see more of a man so celebrated, accepted the invitation.

Left alone, he leaned his head upon his hand, and soon became lost in his reflections.

CHAPTER III.

FAITHFUL AND ILL-FATED LOVE. — THE ASPIRATIONS SURVIVE THE AFFECTIONS.

SINCE that fearful hour in which Adrian Colonna had gazed upon the lifeless form of his adored Irene, the young Roman had undergone the usual vicissitudes of a wandering and adventurous life in those exciting times. His country seemed no longer dear to him. His very rank precluded him from the post he once aspired to take in restoring the liberties of Rome, and he felt that if ever such a revolution could be consummated, it was reserved for one in whose birth and habits the people could feel sympathy and kindred, and who could lift his hand in their behalf without becoming the apostate of his order and the judge of his own House. He had travelled through various courts, and served with renown in various fields. Beloved and honored wheresoever he fixed a temporary home, no change of scene had removed his melancholy, no new ties had chased

away the memory of the Lost. In that era of passionate and poetical romance, which Petrarch represented rather than created, Love had already begun to assume a more tender and sacred character than it had hitherto known; it had gradually imbibed the divine spirit which it derives from Christianity, and which associates its sorrows on earth with the visions and hopes of heaven. To him who relies upon immortality, fidelity to the dead is easy, because death cannot extinguish hope, and the soul of the mourner is already half in the world to come. It is an age that desponds of a future life, — representing death as an eternal separation, in which, if men grieve awhile for the dead, they hasten to reconcile themselves to the living. For true is the old aphorism, that love exists not without hope. And all that romantic worship which the Hermit of Vaucluse felt, or feigned, for Laura, found its temple in the desolate heart of Adrian Colonna. He was emphatically the lover of *his time*! Often as, in his pilgrimage from land to land, he passed the walls of some quiet and lonely convent, he seriously meditated the solemn vows, and internally resolved that the cloister should receive his maturer age. The absence of years had, however, in some degree restored the dimmed and shattered affection for his fatherland, and he desired once more to visit the city in which he first beheld Irene. "Perhaps," he thought, "time may have wrought some unlooked-for change; and I may yet assist to restore my country."

But with this lingering patriotism no ambition was mingled. In that heated stage of action, in which the desire of power seemed to stir through every breast, and Italy had become the El Dorado of wealth or the Utopia of empire to thousands of valiant arms and plotting minds, there was at least one breast that felt the true philosophy of the Hermit. Adrian's nature, though gallant and masculine, was singularly imbued with that elegance of temperament which recoils from rude contact, and to which a lettered and cultivated indolence is the supremest luxury. His education, his experience, and his intellect had placed him far in advance of his age, and he looked with a high contempt on the coarse villanies and base tricks by which Italian ambition sought its road to power. The rise and fall

of Rienzi, who, whatever his failings, was at least the purest and most honorable of the self-raised princes of the age, had conspired to make him despond of the success of noble, as he recoiled from that of selfish aspirations. And the dreamy melancholy which resulted from his ill-starred love yet more tended to wean him from the stale and hackneyed pursuits of the world. His character was full of beauty and of poetry, — not the less so in that it found not a vent for its emotions in the actual occupation of the poet! Pent within, those emotions diffused themselves over all his thoughts and colored his whole soul. Sometimes, in the blessed abstraction of his visions, he pictured to himself the lot he might have chosen had Irene lived and fate united them, — far from the turbulent and vulgar roar of Rome, but amidst some yet unpolluted solitude of the bright Italian soil. Before his eye there rose the lovely landscape, the palace by the borders of the waveless lake, the vineyards in the valley, the dark forests waving from the hill, and that home, the resort and refuge of all the minstrelsy and love of Italy, brightened by the “*Lampeggiar dell’ angelico riso*,”¹ that makes a paradise in the face we love. Often, seduced by such dreams to complete oblivion of his loss, the young wanderer started from the ideal bliss, to behold around him the solitary waste of way, or the moonlit tents of war, or, worse than all, the crowds and revels of a foreign court.

Whether or not such fancies now, for a moment, allured his meditations, conjured up, perhaps, by the name of Irene’s brother, which never sounded in his ears but to awaken ten thousand associations, the Colonna remained thoughtful and absorbed, until he was disturbed by his own squire, who, accompanied by Montreal’s servitors, ushered in his solitary but ample repast. Flasks of the richest Florentine wines; viands prepared with all the art which, alas! Italy has now lost; goblets and salvers of gold and silver prodigally wrought with barbaric gems, — attested the princely luxury which reigned in the camp of the Grand Company. But Adrian saw in all only the spoliation of his degraded country, and felt the splendor almost as an insult. His lonely meal soon concluded,

¹ The splendor of the angel smile. — PETRARCH.

he became impatient of the monotony of his tent; and tempted by the cool air of the descending eve, sauntered carelessly forth. He bent his steps by the side of the brooklet that curved, snake-like and sparkling, by Montreal's tent; and finding a spot somewhat solitary and apart from the warlike tenements around, flung himself by the margin of the stream.

The last rays of the sun quivered on the wave that danced musically over its stony bed; and amidst a little copse on the opposite bank broke the brief and momentary song of such of the bolder habitants of that purple air as the din of the camp had not scared from their green retreat. The clouds lay motionless to the west, in that sky so darkly and intensely blue, never seen but over the landscapes that a Claude or a Rosa loved to paint; and dim and delicious rose-hues gathered over the gray peaks of the distant Apennines. From afar floated the hum of the camp, broken by the neigh of returning steeds, the blast of an occasional bugle, and, at regular intervals, by the armed tramp of the neighboring sentry. And opposite to the left of the copse—upon a rising ground matted with reeds, moss, and waving shrubs—were the ruins of some old Etruscan building, whose name had perished, whose very uses were unknown.

The scene was so calm and lovely, as Adrian gazed upon it, that it was scarcely possible to imagine it at that very hour the haunt of fierce and banded robbers, among most of whom the very soul of man was imbruted, and to all of whom murder or rapine made the habitual occupation of life.

Still buried in his reveries, and carelessly dropping stones into the noisy rivulet, Adrian was aroused by the sound of steps.

"A fair spot to lis'en to the lute and the ballads of Provence," said the voice of Montreal, as the Knight of St. John threw himself on the turf beside the young Colonna.

"You retain, then, your ancient love of your national melodies," said Adrian.

"Ay, I have not yet survived *all* my youth," answered Montreal, with a slight sigh. "But somehow or other, the strains that once pleased my fancy now go too directly to my heart.

So, though I still welcome *jongleur* and minstrel, I bid them sing their *newest* conceits. I cannot wish ever again to hear the poetry I heard when *I was young!*"

"Pardon me," said Adrian, with great interest, "but fain would I have dared, though a secret apprehension prevented me hitherto, — fain would I have dared to question you of that lovely lady, with whom, seven years ago, we gazed at moonlight upon the odorous orange-groves and rosy waters of Terracina."

Montreal turned away his face; he laid his hand on Adrian's arm, and murmured, in a deep and hoarse tone, "I am alone now!"

Adrian pressed his hand in silence. He felt no light shock at thus learning the death of one so gentle, so lovely, and so ill-fated.

"The vows of my knighthood," continued Montreal, "which precluded Adeline the rights of wedlock; the shame of her house; the angry grief of her mother; the wild vicissitudes of my life, so exposed to peril; the loss of her son, — all preyed silently on her frame. She did not die (die is too harsh a word!), but she drooped away, and glided into heaven. Even as on a summer's morn some soft dream fleets across us, growing less and less distinct until it fades, as it were, into light, and we awaken, so faded Adeline's parting spirit, till the daylight of God broke upon it."

Montreal paused a moment, and then resumed: "These thoughts make the boldest of us weak sometimes, and we Provençals are foolish in these matters! God wot, she was very dear to me!"

The Knight bent down and crossed himself devoutly, his lips muttered a prayer. Strange as it may seem to our more enlightened age, so martial a garb did morality then wear that this man, at whose word towns had blazed and torrents of blood had flowed, neither adjudged himself, nor was adjudged by the majority of his contemporaries, a criminal. His order, half monastic, half warlike, was emblematic of himself. He trampled upon man, yet humbled himself to God; nor had all his acquaintance with the refining scepticism of Italy shaken

the sturdy and simple faith of the bold Provençal. So far from recognizing any want of harmony between his calling and his creed, he held that man no true chevalier who was not as devout to the Cross as relentless with the sword.

"And you have no child save the one you lost?" asked Adrian, when he observed the wonted composure of Montreal once more returning.

"None!" said Montreal, as his brow again darkened. "No love-begotten heir of mine will succeed to the fortunes I trust yet to build. Never on earth shall I see upon the face of her child the likeness of Adeline! Yet at Avignon I saw a boy I would have claimed; for methought she must have looked her soul into his eyes, they were so like hers! Well, well! the Provence tree hath other branches, and some unborn nephew must be—what? The stars have not yet decided! But ambition is now the only thing in the world left me to love."

"So differently operates the same misfortune upon different characters," thought the Colonna. "To me, crowns became valueless when I could no longer dream of placing them on Irene's brow!"

The similarity of their fates, however, attracted Adrian strongly towards his host, and the two Knights conversed together with more friendship and unreserve than they had hitherto done. At length Montreal said, "By the way, I have not inquired your destination."

"I am bound to Rome," said Adrian; "and the intelligence I have learned from you incites me thitherward yet more eagerly. If Rienzi return, I may mediate successfully, perchance, between the Tribune-Senator and the nobles; and if I find my cousin, young Stefanello, now the head of our house, more tractable than his sires, I shall not despair of conciliating the less powerful Barons. Rome wants repose; and whoever governs, if he govern but with justice, ought to be supported both by prince and plebeian!"

Montreal listened with great attention, and then muttered to himself, "No, it cannot be!" He mused a little while, shading his brow with his hand, before he said aloud, "To Rome you are bound. Well, we shall meet soon amidst its ruins. Know,

by the way, that my object here is already won: these Florentine merchants have acceded to my terms; they have purchased a two years' peace; to-morrow the camp breaks up, and the Grand Company march to Lombardy. There, if my schemes prosper and the Venetians pay my price, I league the rascals (under Landau, my lieutenant) with the Sea-City, in defiance of the Visconti, and shall pass my autumn in peace amidst the pomps of Rome."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, "your frankness perhaps makes me presumptuous; but when I hear you talk, like a huxtering trader, of selling alike your friendship and your forbearance, I ask myself 'Is this the great Knight of St. John; and have men spoken of him fairly, when they assert the sole stain on his laurels to be his avarice?'"

Montreal bit his lip; nevertheless, he answered calmly, "My frankness has brought its own penance, Lord Adrian. However, I cannot wholly leave so honored a guest under an impression which I feel to be plausible, but not just. No, brave Colonna; report wrongs me. I value Gold, for Gold is the Architect of Power! It fills the camp, it storms the city, it buys the market-place, it raises the palace, it founds the throne. I value Gold; it is the means necessary to my end!"

"And that end—"

"Is—no matter what," said the Knight, coldly. "Let us to our tents; the dews fall heavily, and the malaria floats over these houseless wastes."

The pair rose; yet, fascinated by the beauty of the hour, they lingered for a moment by the brook. The earliest stars shone over its crisping wavelets, and a delicious breeze murmured gently amidst the glossy herbage.

"Thus gazing," said Montreal, softly, "we reverse the old Medusan fable the poets tell us of, and look and muse ourselves out of stone. A little while, and it was the *sunlight* that gilded the wave,—it now shines as brightly and glides as gayly beneath the *stars*; even so rolls the stream of time: one luminary succeeds the other, equally welcomed, equally illuminating, equally evanescent! You see, the poetry of Provence still lives beneath my mail!"

Adrian early sought his couch; but his own thoughts and the sounds of loud mirth that broke from Montreal's tent, where the chief feasted the captains of his band, — a revel from which he had the delicacy to excuse the Roman noble, — kept the Colonna long awake; and he had scarcely fallen into an unquiet slumber, when yet more discordant sounds again invaded his repose. At the earliest dawn the wide armament was astir; the creaking of cordage, the tramp of men, loud orders and louder oaths, the slow rolling of baggage-wains, and the clank of the armorers announced the removal of the camp and the approaching departure of the Grand Company.

Ere Adrian was yet attired, Montreal entered his tent.

"I have appointed," he said, "five-score lances, under a trusty leader, to accompany you, noble Adrian, to the borders of Romagna; they wait your leisure. In another hour I depart; the on-guard are already in motion."

Adrian would fain have declined the proffered escort; but he saw that it would only offend the pride of the chief, who soon retired. Hastily Adrian endued his arms. The air of the fresh morning, and the glad sun rising gorgeously from the hills, revived his wearied spirit. He repaired to Montreal's tent, and found him alone, with the implements of writing before him, and a triumphant smile upon his countenance.

"Fortune showers new favors on me!" he said gayly. "Yesterday the Florentines spared me the trouble of a siege; and to-day (even since I last saw you, — a few minutes since) puts your new Senator of Rome into my power!"

"How! have your bands then arrested Rienzi?"

"Not so; better still! The Tribune changed his plan and repaired to Perugia, where my brothers now abide, — sought them. They have supplied him with money and soldiers enough to brave the perils of the way and to defy the swords of the Barons. So writes my good brother Arimbardo, a man of letters, whom the Tribune thinks rightly he has decoyed with old tales of Roman greatness and mighty promises of grateful advancement. You find me hastily expressing my content at the arrangement. My brothers themselves will accompany the Senator-Tribune to the walls of the Capitol."

"Still, I see not how this places Rienzi in your power."

"No? His soldiers are my creatures, his comrades my brothers, his creditor myself! Let him rule Rome then: the time soon comes when the Vice-Regent must yield to —"

"The Chief of the Grand Company," interrupted Adrian, with a shudder, which the bold Montreal was too engrossed with the unconcealed excitement of his own thoughts to notice. "No, Knight of Provence, basely have we succumbed to domestic tyrants; but never, I trust, will Romans be so vile as to wear the yoke of a foreign usurper."

Montreal looked hard at Adrian, and smiled sternly.

"You mistake me," said he; "and it will be time enough for you to play the Brutus when I assume the Cæsar. Meanwhile we are but host and guest. Let us change the theme."

Nevertheless this, their latter conference, threw a chill over both during the short time the Knights remained together, and they parted with a formality which was ill suited to their friendly intercourse of the night before. Montreal felt he had incautiously revealed himself; but caution was no part of his character whenever he found himself at the head of an army and at the full tide of fortune, — and at that moment so confident was he of the success of his wildest schemes that he recked little whom he offended or whom alarmed.

Slowly, with his strange and ferocious escort, Adrian renewed his way. Winding up a steep ascent that led from the plain, when he reached the summit, the curve in the road showed him the whole army on its march, the gonfalons waving, the armor flashing in the sun, line after line, like a river of steel, and the whole plain bristling with the array of that moving war; while the solemn tread of the armed thousands fell subdued and stifled at times by martial and exulting music. As they swept on, Adrian descried at length the stately and towering form of Montreal upon a black charger, distinguished even at that distance from the rest not more by his gorgeous armor than his lofty stature. So swept he on in the pride of his array, in the flush of his hopes, — the head of a mighty armament, the terror of Italy, the hero that was, the monarch that might be!

BOOK IX.

THE RETURN.

ALLORA la sua venuta fu a Roma sentita; Romani si apparecchiavano a riceverlo con letizia, . . . furo fatti archi trionfali, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 17.

Then the fame of his coming was felt at Rome; the Romans made ready to receive him with gladness, . . . triumphal arches were erected, etc. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE.

ALL Rome was astir; from St. Angelo to the Capitol, windows, balconies, roofs, were crowded with animated thousands. Only here and there, in the sullen quarters of the Colonna, the Orsini, and the Savelli, reigned a death-like solitude and a dreary gloom. In those fortifications, rather than streets, not even the accustomed tread of the barbarian sentinel was heard. The gates closed, the casements barred, the grim silence around, attested the absence of the Barons. They had left the city so soon as they had learned the certain approach of Rienzi. In the villages and castles of the Campagna, surrounded by their mercenaries, they awaited the hour when the people, weary of their idol, should welcome back even those ferocious Iconoclasts.

With these exceptions, all Rome was astir. Triumphal arches of drapery, wrought with gold and silver, raised at every principal vista, were inscribed with mottoes of welcome and rejoicing. At frequent intervals stood youths and maidens, with baskets of flowers and laurels. High above the assembled

multitudes, from the proud tower of Hadrian, from the turrets of the Capitol, from the spires of the sacred buildings dedicated to Apostle and to Saint, floated banners as for a victory. Rome once more opened her arms to receive her Tribune!

Mingled with the crowd, disguised by his large mantle, hidden by the pressure of the throng, his person, indeed, forgotten by most, and in the confusion of the moment heeded by none, stood Adrian Colonna. He had not been able to conquer his interest for the brother of Irene. Solitary amidst his fellow-citizens he stood, — the only one of the proud race of Colonna who witnessed the triumph of the darling of the people.

"They say he has grown large in his prison," said one of the bystanders; "he was lean enough when he came by daybreak out of the church of St. Angelo!"

"Ay," said another, a little man with a shrewd, restless eye, "they say truly: I saw him take leave of the Legate."

Every eye was turned to the last speaker; he became at once a personage of importance. "Yes," continued the little man, with an elated and pompous air, "as soon, d'ye see, as he had prevailed on Messere Brettone and Messere Arimbald, the brothers of Fra Moreale, to accompany him from Perugia to Monte Fiascone, he went at once to the Legate d'Albornoz, who was standing in the open air conversing with his captains. A crowd followed. I was one of them; and the Tribune nodded at me — ay, that did he! — and so, with his scarlet cloak and his scarlet cap, he faced the proud Cardinal with a pride greater than his own. 'Monsignore,' said he, 'though you accord me neither money nor arms to meet the dangers of the road and brave the ambush of the Barons, I am prepared to depart. Senator of Rome his Holiness hath made me; according to custom, I pray you, Monsignore, forthwith to confirm the rank.' I would you could have seen how the proud Spaniard stared and blushed and frowned; but he bit his lip, and said little."

"And confirmed Rienzi Senator?"

"Yes; and blessed him, and bade him depart."

"Senator!" said a stalwart but gray-haired giant with folded

arms: "I like not a title that has been borne by a patrician. I fear me in the new title he will forget the old."

"Fie, Cecco del Vecchio, you were always a grumbler!" said a merchant of cloth, whose commodity the ceremonial had put in great request. "Fie! for my part, I think Senator a less new-fangled title than Tribune. I hope there will be feastings enow, at last. Rome has been long dull. A bad time for trade, I warrant me!"

The artisan grinned scornfully. He was one of those who distinguished between the middle class and the working, and he loathed a merchant as much as he did a noble. "The day wears," said the little man; "he must be here anon. The Senator's lady, and all his train, have gone forth to meet him these two hours."

Scarce were these words uttered when the crowd to the right swayed restlessly; and presently a horseman rode rapidly through the street. "Way there! Keep back! Way, make way for the Most Illustrious the Senator of Rome!"

The crowd became hushed, then murmuring, then hushed again. From balcony and casement stretched the neck of every gazer. The tramp of steeds was heard at a distance, the sound of clarion and trumpet; then, gleaming through the distant curve of the streets, was seen the wave of the gonfalon; then the glitter of spears; and then from the whole multitude, as from one voice, arose the shout: "He comes! he comes!"

Adrian shrank yet more backward amongst the throng, and leaning against the wall of one of the houses, contemplated the approaching pageant.

First came, six abreast, the procession of Roman horsemen who had gone forth to meet the Senator, bearing boughs of olive in their hands, each hundred preceded by banners inscribed with the words, "Liberty and peace restored." As these passed the group by Adrian, each more popular citizen of the cavalcade was recognized, and received with loud shouts. By the garb and equipment of the horsemen, Adrian saw that they belonged chiefly to the traders of Rome, — a race who, he well knew, unless strangely altered, valued liberty only as a commercial

speculation. "A vain support these," thought the Colonna. "What next?" On, then, came in glittering armor the German mercenaries, hired by the gold of the brothers of Provence, in number two hundred and fifty, and previously in the pay of Malatesta of Rimini, — tall, stern, sedate, disciplined, eyeing the crowd with a look, half of barbarian wonder, half of insolent disdain. No shout of gratulation welcomed these sturdy strangers; it was evident that their aspect cast a chill over the assembly.

"Shame!" growled Cecco del Vecchio, audibly. "Has the people's friend need of the swords which guard an Orsini or a Malatesta? Shame!"

No voice this time silenced the huge malcontent.

"His only real defence against the Barons," thought Adrian, "if he pay them well! But their number is not sufficient."

Next came two hundred *fantassins*, or foot-soldiers, of Tuscany, with the corselets and arms of the heavy-armed soldiery, — a gallant company, and whose cheerful looks and familiar bearing appeared to sympathize with the crowd. And in truth they did so, for they were Tuscans, and therefore lovers of freedom. In them, too the Romans seemed to recognize natural and legitimate allies, and there was a general cry of "Vivano i bravi Toscani!"

"Poor defence!" thought the more sagacious Colonna; "the Barons can awe and the mob corrupt them."

Next came a file of trumpeters and standard-bearers; and now the sound of the music was drowned by shouts which seemed to rise simultaneously as from every quarter of the city: "Rienzi! Rienzi! Welcome, welcome! Liberty and Rienzi! Rienzi and the Good Estate!" Flowers dropped on his path; kerchiefs and banners waved from every house; tears might be seen coursing, unheeded, down bearded cheeks; youth and age were kneeling together, with uplifted hands invoking blessings on the head of the Restored. On he came, the Senator-Tribune, — "*the Phoenix to his pyre!*"

Robed in scarlet that literally blazed with gold, his proud head bared in the sun, and bending to the saddle-bow, Rienzi passed slowly through the throng. Not in the flush of that

hour were visible on his glorious countenance the signs of disease and care; the very enlargement of his proportions gave a greater majesty to his mien. Hope sparkled in his eye, triumph and empire sat upon his brow. The crowd could not contain themselves; they pressed forward, each upon each, anxious to catch the glance of his eye, to touch the hem of his robe. He himself was deeply affected by their joy. He halted; with faltering and broken words he attempted to address them. "I am repaid," he said, — "repaid for all; may I live to make you happy!"

The crowd parted again; the Senator moved on; again the crowd closed in. Behind the Tribune, to their excited imagination, seemed to move the very goddess of ancient Rome.

Upon a steed caparisoned with cloth of gold, in snow-white robes studded with gems that flashed back the day, came the beautiful and regal Nina. The memory of her pride, her ostentation, all forgotten in that moment, she was scarce less welcome, scarce less idolized, than her lord. And her smile all radiant with joy, her lip quivering with proud and elate emotion, never had she seemed at once so born alike for love and for command, — a Zenobia passing through the pomp of Rome; not a captive, but a queen.

But not upon that stately form riveted the gaze of Adrian; pale, breathless, trembling, he clung to the walls against which he leaned. Was it a dream? Had the dead revived? Or was it his own, his living Irene, whose soft and melancholy loveliness shone sadly by the side of Nina, — a star beside the moon? The pageant faded from his eyes, all grew grim and dark. For a moment he was insensible. When he recovered, the crowd was hurrying along, confused and blent with the mighty stream that followed the procession. Through the moving multitude he caught the graceful form of Irene, again snatched by the closing standards of the procession from his view. His blood rushed back from his heart through every vein. He was as a man who for years had been in a fearful trance, and who is suddenly awakened to the light of heaven.

One of that mighty throng remained motionless with Adrian. It was Cecco del Vecchio.

"*He did not see me,*" muttered the smith to himself; "*old friends are forgotten now!* Well, well; Cecco del Vecchio hates tyrants still, no matter what their name, nor how smoothly they are disguised. He did not see *ME!* Umph!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MASQUERADE.

THE acuter reader has already learned, without the absolute intervention of the author as narrator, the incidents occurring to Rienzi in the interval between his acquittal at Avignon and his return to Rome. As the impression made by Nina upon the softer and better nature of Albornoz died away, he naturally began to consider his guest — as the profound politicians of that day ever considered men — a piece upon the great chess-board, to be moved, advanced, or sacrificed, as best suited the scheme in view. His purpose accomplished in the recovery of the Patrimonial Territory, the submission of John di Vico, and the fall and death of the demagogue Baroncelli, the Cardinal deemed it far from advisable to restore to Rome, and with so high a dignity, the able and ambitious Rienzi. Before the daring Roman even his own great spirit quailed, and he was wholly unable to conceive or to calculate the policy that might be adopted by the new Senator when once more lord of Rome. Without affecting to detain, he therefore declined to assist in restoring him. And Rienzi thus saw himself within an easy march of Rome, without one soldier to protect him against the Barons by the way. But Heaven had decreed that no *single* man, however gifted or however powerful, should long counteract or master the destinies of Rienzi; and perhaps in no more glittering scene of his life did he ever evince so dexterous and subtle an intellect as he now did in extricating himself from the wiles of the Cardinal. Repairing to Perugia, he had, as we have seen, procured, through the brothers of Montreal, men

and money for his return. But the Knight of St. John was greatly mistaken if he imagined that Rienzi was not thoroughly aware of the perilous and treacherous tenure of the support he had received. His keen eye read at a glance the aims and the characters of the brothers of Montreal; he knew that while affecting to serve him, they designed to control; that, made the debtor of the grasping and aspiring Montreal, and surrounded by the troops conducted by Montreal's brethren, he was in the midst of a net which, if not broken, would soon involve fortune and life itself in its fatal and deadly meshes. But confident in the resources and promptitude of his own genius, he yet sanguinely trusted to make those *his* puppets who dreamed that he was their own; and, with empire for the stake, he cared not how crafty the antagonists he was compelled to engage.

Meanwhile, uniting to all his rasher and all his nobler qualities a profound dissimulation, he appeared to trust implicitly to his Provençal companions; and his first act on entering the Capitol, after the triumphal procession, was to reward with the highest dignities in his gift Messere Arimbaldo and Messere Brettone de Montreal!

High feasting was there that night in the halls of the Capitol; but dearer to Rienzi than all the pomp of the day were the smiles of Nina. Her proud and admiring eyes, swimming with delicious tears, fixed upon his countenance, she but felt that they were re-united, and that the hours, however brilliantly illumined, were hastening to that moment when, after so desolate and dark an absence, they might once more be alone.

Far other the thoughts of Adrian Colonna as he sat alone in the dreary palace in the yet more dreary quarter of his haughty race. Irene then was alive, — he had been deceived by some strange error; she had escaped the devouring pestilence: and something in the pale sadness of her gentle features, even in that day of triumph, told him he was still remembered. But as his mind by degrees calmed itself from its first wild and tumultuous rapture, he could not help asking himself the question whether they were not still to be divided?

Stefanello Colonna, the grandson of the old Stephen and — by the death of his sire and brother — the youthful head of that powerful House, had already raised his standard against the Senator. Fortifying himself in the almost impregnable fastness of Palestrina, he had assembled around him all the retainers of his family, and his lawless soldiery now ravaged the neighboring plains far and wide.

Adrian foresaw that the lapse of a few days would suffice to bring the Colonna and the Senator to open war. Could he take part against those of his own blood? The very circumstance of his love for Irene would yet more rob such a proceeding of all appearance of disinterested patriotism, and yet more deeply and irremediably stain his knightly fame, wherever the sympathy of his equals was enlisted with the cause of the Colonna. On the other hand, not only his love for the Senator's sister, but his own secret inclinations and honest convictions were on the side of one who alone seemed to him possessed of the desire and the genius to repress the disorders of his fallen city. Long meditating, he feared no alternative was left him but in the same cruel neutrality to which he had been before condemned; but he resolved at least to make the attempt — rendered favorable and dignified by his birth and reputation — to reconcile the contending parties. To affect this, he saw that he must begin with his haughty cousin. He was well aware that were it known that he had first obtained an interview with Rienzi, did it appear as if he were charged with overtures from the Senator, although Stefanello himself might be inclined to yield to his representations, the insolent and ferocious Barons who surrounded him would not deign to listen to the envoy of the People's chosen one; and instead of being honored as an intercessor, he should be suspected as a traitor. He determined, then, to depart for Palestrina; but (and his heart beat audibly) would it not be possible first to obtain an interview with Irene? It was no easy enterprise, surrounded as she was; but he resolved to adventure it. He summoned Giulio.

"The Senator holds a festival this evening: think you that the assemblage will be numerous?"

"I hear," answered Giulio, "that the banquet given to the Ambassadors and Signors to-day is to be followed to-morrow by a mask, to which all ranks are admitted. By Bacchus,¹ if the Tribune only invited nobles, the smallest closet in the Capitol would suffice to receive his maskers. I suppose a mask has been resolved on in order to disguise the quality of the visitors."

Adrian mused a moment; and the result of his revery was a determination to delay for another sun his departure to Palestrina, to take advantage of the nature of the revel, and to join the masquerade.

That species of entertainment, though unusual at that season of the year, had been preferred by Rienzi, partly and ostensibly because it was one in which all his numerous and motley supporters could be best received, but chiefly and secretly because it afforded himself and his confidential friends the occasion to mix unsuspected amongst the throng, and learn more of the real anticipations of the Romans with respect to his policy and his strength than could well be gathered from the enthusiasm of a public spectacle.

The following night was beautifully serene and clear. The better to accommodate the numerous guests, and to take advantage of the warm and moonlit freshness of the air, the open court of the Capitol, with the place of the Lion (as well as the state apartments within), was devoted to the festival.

As Adrian entered the festive court with the rush of the throng, it chanced that in the eager impatience of some maskers, more vehement than the rest, his vizard was deranged. He hastily replaced it, but not before one of the guests had recognized his countenance.

From courtesy, Rienzi and his family remained at first unmasked. They stood at the head of the stairs to which the old Egyptian Lion gave the name. The lights shone over the colossal monument, which, torn from its antique home, had witnessed, in its grim repose, the rise and lapse of countless generations, and the dark and stormy revolutions of avenging

¹ Still a common Roman expletive.

fate. It was an ill omen, often afterwards remarked, that the place of that state festival was the place also of the state executions. But at that moment, as group after group pressed forward to win smile and word from the celebrated man whose fortunes had been the theme of Europe, or to bend in homage to the lustrous loveliness of Nina, no omen and no warning clouded the universal gladness.

Behind Nina, well contented to shrink from the gaze of the throng, and to feel her softer beauty eclipsed by the dazzling and gorgeous charms of her brother's wife, stood Irene. Amidst the crowd, on her alone Adrian fixed his eyes. The years which had flown over the fair brow of the girl of sixteen—then animated by, yet trembling beneath, the first wild breath of Love, youth in every vein, passion and childish tenderness in every thought—had not marred, but they had changed, the character of Irene's beauty. Her cheek, no longer varying with every instant, was settled into a delicate and thoughtful paleness; her form, more rounded to the proportions of Roman beauty, had assumed an air of dignified and calm repose. No longer did the restless eye wander in search of some imagined object, no longer did the lip quiver into smiles at some untold hope or half-unconscious recollection. A grave and mournful expression gave to her face (still how sweet!) a gravity beyond her years. The bloom, the flush, the April of the heart, was gone; but yet neither time, nor sorrow, nor blighted love had stolen from her countenance its rare and angelic softness, nor that inexpressible and virgin modesty of form and aspect which, contrasting the bolder beauties of Italy, had more than aught else distinguished to Adrian, from all other women, the idol of his heart. And feeding his gaze upon those dark, deep eyes, which spoke of thought far away and busy with the past, Adrian felt again and again that he was not forgotten! Hovering near her, but suffering the crowd to press one after another before him, he did not perceive that he had attracted the eagle eye of the Senator.

In fact, as one of the maskers passed Rienzi, he had whispered: "Beware, a Colonna is among the masks! beneath the

reveller's domino has often lurked the assassin's dagger. Yonder stands your foe, — mark him ! ”

These words were the first sharp and thrilling intimation of the perils into which he had rushed that the Tribune-Senator had received since his return. He changed color slightly ; and for some minutes the courtly smile and ready greeting, with which he had hitherto delighted every guest, gave way to a moody abstraction.

“ Why stands yon strange man so mute and motionless ? ” whispered he to Nina. “ He speaks to none, he approaches us not. A churl, a churl, — he must be seen to ! ”

“ Doubtless some German or English barbarian, ” answered Nina. “ Let not, my lord, so slight a cloud dim your merriment. ”

“ You are right, dearest, — we have friends here ; we are well girt. And, by my father's ashes, I feel that I must accustom myself to danger ! Nina, let us move on ; methinks we might now mix among the maskers, masked ourselves. ”

The music played loud and cheerily as the Senator and his party mingled with the throng. But still his eye turned ever towards the gray domino of Adrian, and he perceived that it followed his steps. Approaching the private entrance of the Capitol, he for a few minutes lost sight of his unwelcome pursuer ; but just as he entered, turning abruptly, Rienzi perceived him close at his side : the next moment the stranger had vanished amidst the throng. But that moment had sufficed to Adrian, — he had reached Irene. “ Adrian Colonna, ” he whispered, “ waits thee beside the Lion. ”

In the absorption of his own reflections, Rienzi fortunately did not notice the sudden paleness and agitation of his sister. Entered within his palace, he called for wine. The draught revived his spirits ; he listened smilingly to the sparkling remarks of Nina ; and enduing his mask and disguise, said with his wonted cheerfulness : “ Now for Truth ! Strange that in festivals it should only speak behind a vizard ! My sweet sister, thou hast lost thine old smile, and I would rather see that than — Ha ! has Irene vanished ? ”

“ Only, I suppose, to change her dress, my Cola, and mingle

with the revellers," answered Nina. "Let my smile atone for hers."

Rienzi kissed the bright brow of his wife as she clung fondly to his bosom. "Thy smile is the sunlight," said he, "but this girl disturbs me. Methinks *now*, at least, she might wear a gladder aspect."

"Is there nothing of love beneath my fair sister's gloom?" answered Nina. "Do you not call to mind how she loved Adrian Colonna?"

"Does that fantasy hold still?" returned Rienzi, musingly. "Well, and she is fit bride for a monarch."

"Yet it were an alliance that would, better than one with monarchs, strengthen thy power at Rome."

"Ay, were it possible; but that haughty race! Perchance this very masker that so haunted our steps was but her lover. I will look to this. Let us forth, my Nina. Am I well cloaked?"

"Excellently well! And I?"

"The sun behind a cloud."

"Ah! let us not tarry long. What hour of revel like that when, thy hand in mine, this head upon thy bosom, we forget the sorrows we have known, and even the triumphs we have shared?"

Meanwhile Irene, confused and lost amidst a transport of emotion, already disguised and masked, was threading her way through the crowd back to the staircase of the Lion. With the absence of the Senator that spot had been comparatively deserted; music and the dance attracted the maskers to another quarter of the wide space. And Irene, now approaching, beheld the moonlight fall over the statue, and a solitary figure leaning against the pedestal. She paused, the figure approached, and again she heard the voice of her early love.

"Oh, Irene, recognized even in this disguise!" said Adrian, seizing her trembling hand, "have I lived to gaze again upon that form, to touch this hand? Did not these eyes behold thee lifeless in that fearful vault which I shudder to recall? By what miracle wert thou raised again? By what means did

Heaven spare to this earth one that it seemed already to have placed amongst its angels?"

"Was this indeed thy belief?" said Irene, falteringly, but with an accent eloquent of joy. "Thou didst not then willingly desert me? Unjust that I was, I wronged thy noble nature, and deemed that my brother's fall, my humble lineage, thy brilliant fate, had made thee renounce Irene!"

"Unjust indeed!" answered the lover. "But surely I saw thee amongst the dead! Thy cloak, with the silver stars, — who else wore the arms of the Roman Tribune?"

"Was it but the cloak then, which, dropped in the streets, was probably assumed by some more ill-fated victim, — was it *that* sight alone that made thee so soon despair? Ah! Adrian," continued Irene, tenderly, but with reproach, "not even when I saw *thee* seemingly lifeless on the couch by which I had watched three days and nights, not even then did *I* despair!"

"What, then, my vision did not deceive me? It was you who watched by my bed in that grim hour, whose love guarded, whose care preserved me? And I, wretch that I was! —"

"Nay," answered Irene, "your thought was natural. Heaven seemed to endow me with superhuman strength whilst I was necessary to thee. But judge of my dismay. I left thee to seek the good friar who attended thee as thy leech; I returned, and found thee not. Heart-sick and terrified, I searched the desolate city in vain. Strong as I was while hope supported me, I sank beneath fear. And my brother found me, senseless and stretched on the ground, by the church of St. Mark."

"The church of St. Mark! So foretold his dream!"

"He had told me he had met thee; we searched for thee in vain. At length we heard that thou hadst left the city, and — and — I rejoiced, Adrian, but I repined!"

For some minutes the young lovers surrendered themselves to the delight of re-union, while new explanations called forth new transports.

"And now," murmured Irene, "now that we have met —" She paused, and her mask concealed her blushes.

"Now that we have met," said Adrian, filling up the silence, "wouldst thou say further, 'that we should not part'? Trust me, dearest, that is the hope that animates my heart. It was but to enjoy these brief, bright moments with thee that I delayed my departure to Palestrina. Could I but hope to bring my young cousin into amity with thy brother, no barrier would prevent our union. Willingly I forget the past,—the death of my unhappy kinsmen (victims, it is true, to their own faults); and, perhaps, amidst all the crowds that hailed his return, none more appreciated the great and lofty qualities of Cola di Rienzi than did Adrian Colonna."

"If this be so," said Irene, "let me hope the best. Meanwhile, it is enough of comfort and of happiness to know that we love each other as of old. Ah! Adrian, I am sadly changed, and often have I thought it a thing beyond my dreams that thou shouldst see me again and love me still."

"Fairer art thou and lovelier than ever," answered Adrian, passionately; "and time, which has ripened thy bloom, has but taught me more deeply to feel thy value. Farewell, Irene! I linger here no longer; thou wilt, I trust, hear soon of my success with my House, and ere the week be over I may return to claim thy hand in the face of day."

The lovers parted; Adrian lingered on the spot, and Irene hastened to bury her emotion and her raptures in her own chamber.

As her form vanished, and the young Colonna slowly turned away, a tall mask strode abruptly towards him.

"Thou art a Colonna," it said, "and in the power of the Senator. Dost thou tremble?"

"If I be a Colonna, rude masker," answered Adrian, coldly, "thou shouldst know the old proverb: 'He who stirs the column shall rue the fall.'"

The stranger laughed aloud, and then, lifting his mask, Adrian saw that it was the Senator who stood before him.

"My Lord Adrian di Castello," said Rienzi, resuming all his gravity, "is it as friend or foe that you have honored our revels this night?"

"Senator of Rome," answered Adrian, with equal stateliness,

"I partake of no man's hospitality but as a friend. A foe, at least to you, I trust never justly to be esteemed."

"I would," rejoined Rienzi, "that I could apply to myself unreservedly that most flattering speech. Are these friendly feelings entertained towards me as the Governor of the Roman people, or as the brother of the woman who has listened to your vows?"

Adrian, who when the Senator had unmasked had followed his example, felt at these words that his eye quailed beneath Rienzi's. However, he recovered himself with the wonted readiness of an Italian, and replied laconically, —

"As both."

"Both!" echoed Rienzi. "Then, indeed, noble Adrian, you are welcome hither. And yet, methinks, if you conceived there was no cause for enmity between us, you would have wooed the sister of Cola di Rienzi in a guise more worthy of your birth and, permit me to add, of that station which God, destiny, and my country have accorded unto *me*. You dare not, young Colonna, meditate dishonor to the sister of the Senator of Rome. High-born as you are, she is your equal."

"Were I the Emperor, whose simple knight I but am, your sister were my equal," answered Adrian, warmly. "Rienzi, I grieve that I am discovered to you yet. I had trusted that, as a mediator between the Barons and yourself, I might first have won your confidence, and then claimed my reward. Know that with to-morrow's dawn I depart for Palestrina, seeking to reconcile my young cousin to the choice of the People and the Pontiff. Various reasons, which I need not now detail, would have made me wish to undertake this heraldry of peace without previous communication with you. But since we *have* met, intrust me with any terms of conciliation, and I pledge you the right hand, not of a Roman noble, — alas! the *prisca fides* has departed from that pledge, — but of a Knight of the Imperial Court, that I will not betray your confidence."

Rienzi, accustomed to read the human countenance, had kept his eyes intently fixed upon Adrian while he spoke; when the Colonna concluded, he pressed the proffered hand, and said,

with that familiar and winning sweetness which at times was so peculiar to his manner, —

"I trust you, Adrian, from my soul. You were mine early friend in calmer, perchance happier, years. And never did river reflect the stars more clearly than your heart then mirrored back the truth. I trust you!"

While thus speaking, he had mechanically led back the Colonna to the statue of the Lion; there pausing, he resumed: —

"Know that I have this morning despatched my delegate to your cousin Stefanello. With all due courtesy, I have apprised him of my return to Rome, and invited hither his honored presence. Forgetting all ancient feuds, mine own past exile, I have assured him, here, the station and dignity due to the head of the Colonna. All that I ask in return is obedience to the law. Years and reverses have abated my younger pride; and though I may yet preserve the sternness of the Judge, none shall hereafter complain of the insolence of the Tribune."

"I would," answered Adrian, "that your mission to Stefanello had been delayed a day; I would fain have forestalled its purport. Howbeit, you increase my desire of departure. Should I yet succeed in obtaining an honorable and peaceful reconciliation, it is not in disguise that I will woo your sister."

"And never did Colonna," replied Rienzi, loftily, "bring to his House a maiden whose alliance more gratified ambition. I still see, as I have seen ever, in mine own projects and mine own destinies the chart of the new Roman Empire!"

"Be not too sanguine yet, brave Rienzi," replied Adrian, laying his hand on the Lion of Basalt: "bethink thee on how many scheming brains this dumb image of stone hath looked down from its pedestal, — schemes of sand, and schemers of dust. Thou hast enough, at present, for the employ of all thine energy, — not to extend thy power, but to preserve thyself. For, trust me, never stood human greatness on so wild and dark a precipice!"

"Thou art honest," said the Senator; "and these are the first words of doubt, and yet of sympathy, I have heard in Rome. But the People love me, the Barons have fled from

Rome, the Pontiff approves, and the swords of the Northmen guard the avenues of the Capitol. But these are nought; in mine own honesty are my spear and buckler. "Oh, never," continued Rienzi, kindling with enthusiasm, "never since the days of the old Republic, did Roman dream a purer and a brighter aspiration than that which animates and supports me now! Peace restored, law established, art, letters, intellect, dawning upon the night of time; the Patricians, no longer bandits of rapine, but the guards of order; the People ennobled from a mob, brave to protect, enlightened to guide, themselves. Then, not by the violence of arms, but by the majesty of her moral power, shall the Mother of Nations claim the obedience of her children. Thus dreaming and thus hoping, shall I tremble or despond? No, Adrian Colonna; come weal or woe, I abide, unshrinking and unawed, by the chances of my doom!"

So much did the manner and the tone of the Senator exalt his language that even the sober sense of Adrian was enchanted and subdued. He kissed the hand he held, and said earnestly, —

"A doom that I will deem it my boast to share, — a career that it will be my glory to smooth. If I succeed in my present mission —"

"You are my brother!" said Rienzi.

"If I fail?"

"You may equally claim that alliance. You pause, you change color."

"Can I desert my House?"

"Young lord," said Rienzi, loftily, "say rather can you desert your country. If you doubt my honesty, if you fear my ambition, desist from your task, rob me not of a single foe. But if you believe that I have the will and the power to serve the state; if you recognize, even in the reverses and calamities I have known and mastered, the protecting hand of the Saviour of nations; if those reverses were but the mercies of Him who chasteneth, necessary, it may be, to correct my earlier daring and sharpen yet more my intellect; if, in a word, thou believest me one whom, whatever be his faults,

God hath preserved for the sake of Rome, — forget that you are a Colonna, remember only that you are a Roman !”

“You have conquered me, strange and commanding spirit,” said Adrian, in a low voice, completely carried away ; “and whatever the conduct of my kindred, I am yours and Rome’s. Farewell !”

CHAPTER III.

ADRIAN’S ADVENTURES AT PALESTRINA.

It was yet noon when Adrian beheld before him the lofty mountains that shelter Palestrina, — the Præneste of the ancient world. Back to a period before Romulus existed, in the earliest ages of that mysterious civilization which in Italy preceded the birth of Rome, could be traced the existence and the power of that rocky city. Eight dependent towns owned its sway and its wealth ; its position and the strength of those mighty walls, in whose ruins may yet be traced the masonry of the remote Pelasgi, had long braved the ambition of the neighboring Rome. From that very citadel — the Mural Crown¹ of the mountain — had waved the standard of Marius ; and up the road which Adrian’s scanty troop slowly wound, had echoed the march of the murderous Sylla, on his return from the Mithridatic war. Below, where the city spreads towards the plain, were yet seen the shattered and roofless columns of the once celebrated Temple of Fortune ; and still the immemorial olives clustered gray and mournfully around the ruins.

A more formidable hold the Barons of Rome could not have selected ; and as Adrian’s military eye scanned the steep ascent and the rugged walls, he felt that with ordinary skill it might defy for months all the power of the Roman Senator. Below,

¹ Hence, apparently, its Greek name of Stephane. Palestrina is yet one of the many proofs which the vicinity of Rome affords of the old Greek civilization of Italy.

in the fertile valley, dismantled cottages and trampled harvests attested the violence and rapine of the insurgent Barons; and at that very moment were seen, in the old plain of the warlike Hernici, troops of armed men driving before them herds of sheep and cattle, collected in their lawless incursions. In sight of that Præneste which had been the favorite retreat of the luxurious lords of Rome in its most polished day, the Age of Iron seemed renewed.

The banner of the Colonna, borne by Adrian's troop, obtained ready admittance at the Porta del Sole. As he passed up the irregular and narrow streets that ascended to the citadel, groups of foreign mercenaries, half-ragged, half-tawdry knots of abandoned women, mixed here and there with the liveries of the Colonna, stood loitering amidst the ruins of ancient fanes and palaces, or basked lazily in the sun upon terraces through which, from amidst weeds and grass, glowed the imperishable hues of the rich mosaics which had made the pride of that lettered and graceful nobility of whom savage freebooters were now the heirs.

The contrast between the Past and the Present forcibly occurred to Adrian as he passed along; and despite his order, he felt as if Civilization itself were enlisted against his House upon the side of Rienzi.

Leaving his train in the court of the citadel, Adrian demanded admission to the presence of his cousin. He had left Stefanello a child on his departure from Rome, and there could therefore be but a slight and unfamiliar acquaintance betwixt them, despite their kindred.

Peals of laughter came upon his ear as he followed one of Stefanello's gentlemen through a winding passage that led to the principal chamber. The door was thrown open, and Adrian found himself in a rude hall, to which some appearance of hasty state and attempted comfort had been given. Costly arras imperfectly clothed the stone walls, and the rich seats and decorated tables, which the growing civilization of the northern cities of Italy had already introduced into the palaces of Italian nobles, strangely contrasted the rough pavement, spread with heaps of armor negligently piled around. At the

farther end of the apartment, Adrian shudderingly perceived, set in due and exact order, the implements of torture.

Stefanello Colonna, with two other Barons, indolently reclined on seats drawn around a table, in the recess of a deep casement, from which might be still seen the same glorious landscape, bounded by the dim spires of Rome, which Hannibal and Pyrrhus had ascended that very citadel to survey!

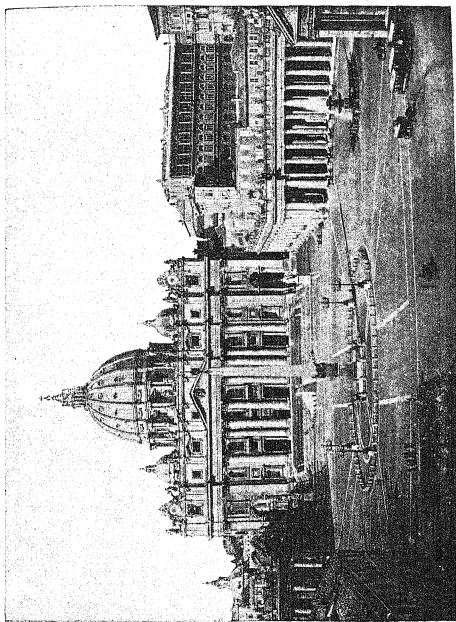
Stefanello himself, in the first bloom of youth, bore already on his beardless countenance those traces usually the work of the passions and vices of maturest manhood. His features were cast in the mould of the old Stephen's; in their clear, sharp, high-bred outline might be noticed that regular and graceful symmetry which blood, in men as in animals, will sometimes entail through generations; but the features were wasted and meagre. His brows were knit in an eternal frown; his thin and bloodless lips wore that insolent contempt which seems so peculiarly cold and unlovely in early youth; and the deep and livid hollows round his eyes spoke of habitual excess and premature exhaustion. By him sat, reconciled by hatred to one another, the hereditary foes of his race; the soft, but cunning and astute, features of Luca di Savelli contrasted with the broad frame and ferocious countenance of the Prince of the Orsini.

The young head of the Colonna rose with some cordiality to receive his cousin. "Welcome," he said, "dear Adrian; you are arrived in time to assist us with your well-known military skill. Think you not we shall stand a long siege, if the insolent plebeian dare adventure it? You know our friends, the Orsini and the Savelli? Thanks to Saint Peter, or Peter's delegate, we have now happily meaner throats to cut than those of each other!"

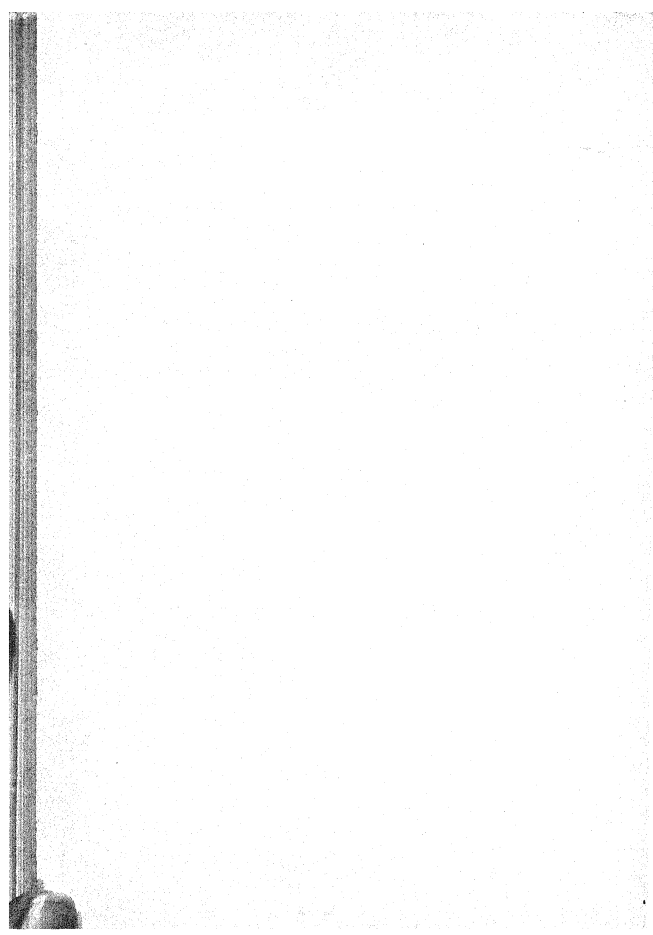
Thus saying, Stefanello again threw himself listlessly on his seat, and the shrill, woman's voice of Savelli took part in the dialogue.

"I would, noble Signor, that you had come a few hours earlier; we are still making merry at the recollection, — he, he, he!"

"Ah! excellent," cried Stefanello, joining in the laugh; "our



BASILICA OF ST. PETER'S.



cousin has had a loss. Know, Adrian, that this base fellow, whom the Pope has had the impudence to create Senator, dared but yesterday to send us a varlet, whom he called — by Our Lady! — his *ambassador*!”

“Would you could have seen his mantle, Signor Adrian!” chimed in the Savelli, — “purple velvet, as I live, decorated in gold, with the arms of Rome. We soon spoiled his finery.”

“What!” exclaimed Adrian, “you did not break the laws of all nobility and knighthood, — you offered no insult to a herald?”

“Herald, sayest thou?” cried Stefanello, frowning till his eyes were scarce visible. “It is for Princes and Barons alone to employ heralds. An I had had my will, I would have sent back the minion’s head to the usurper.”

“What did ye then?” asked Adrian, coldly.

“Bade our swineherds dip the fellow in the ditch, and gave him a night’s lodging in a dungeon to dry himself withal.”

“And this morning, — he, he, he!” added the Savelli, — “we had him before us, and drew his teeth, one by one. I would you could have heard the fellow mumble out for mercy!”

Adrian rose hastily, and struck the table fiercely with his gauntlet.

“Stefanello Colonna,” said he, coloring with noble rage, “answer me: did you dare to inflict this indelible disgrace upon the name we jointly bear? Tell me at least that you protested against this foul treason to all the laws of civilization and of honor. You answer not. House of the Colonna, can such be thy representative!”

“To me these words!” said Stefanello, trembling with passion. “Beware! Methinks *thou* art the traitor, leagued perhaps with yon rascal mob. Well do I remember that thou, the betrothed of the Demagogue’s sister, didst not join with my uncle and my father of old, but didst basely leave the city to her plebeian tyrant.”

“That did he!” said the fierce Orsini, approaching Adrian menacingly, while the gentle cowardice of Savelli sought in

vain to pluck him back by the mantle — “that did he! and but for thy presence, Stefanello —”

“Coward and blusterer!” interrupted Adrian, fairly beside himself with indignation and shame, and dashing his gauntlet in the very face of the advancing Orsini — “wouldst thou threaten one who has maintained, in every list of Europe and against the stoutest Chivalry of the North, the honor of Rome, which thy deeds the while disgraced? By this gage, I spit upon and defy thee. With lance and with brand, on horse and on foot, I maintain against thee and all thy line that thou art no knight to have thus maltreated, in thy strongholds, a peaceful and unarmed herald. Yes, even here, on the spot of thy disgrace, I challenge thee to arms!”

“To the court below! Follow me,” said Orsini, sullenly, and striding towards the threshold. “What ho, there! my helmet and breastplate!”

“Stay, noble Orsini,” said Stefanello. “The insult offered to thee is my quarrel, — mine was the deed; and against me speaks this degenerate scion of our line. Adrian di Castello, sometime called Colonna, surrender your sword: you are my prisoner!”

“Oh!” said Adrian, grinding his teeth, “that my ancestral blood did not flow through thy veins; else — but enough! Me, your equal, and the favored Knight of the Emperor, whose advent now brightens the frontiers of Italy! me you dare not detain. For your friends, I shall meet them yet, perhaps, ere many days are over, where none shall separate our swords. Till then remember, Orsini, that it is against no unpractised arm that thou wilt have to redeem thine honor!”

Adrian, his drawn sword in his hand, strode towards the door, and passed the Orsini, who stood, lowering and irresolute, in the centre of the apartment.

Savelli whispered Stefanello. “He says, ‘Ere many days be past!’ Be sure, dear Signor, that he goes to join Rienzi. Remember, the alliance he once sought with the Tribune’s sister may be renewed. Beware of him! Ought he to leave the castle? The name of a Colonna, associated with the mob, would distract and divide half our strength.”

"Fear me not," returned Stefanello, with a malignant smile. "Ere you spoke, I had determined!"

The young Colonna lifted the arras from the wall, opened a door, and passed into a low hall, in which sat twenty mercenaries.

"Quick!" said he. "Seize and disarm yon stranger in the green mantle, but slay him not. Bid the guard below find dungeons for his train. Quick! ere he reach the gate."

Adrian had gained the open hall below — his train and his steed were in sight in the court — when suddenly the soldiery of the Colonna, rushing through another passage than that which he had passed, surrounded and intercepted his retreat.

"Yield thee, Adrian di Castello," cried Stefanello from the summit of the stairs, "or your blood be on your own head."

Three steps did Adrian make through the press, and three of his enemies fell beneath his sword. "To the rescue!" he shouted to his band; and already those bold and daring troopers had gained the hall. Presently the alarum-bell tolled loud, the court swarmed with soldiers. Oppressed by numbers, beat down rather than subdued, Adrian's little train was soon secured, and the flower of the Colonna, wounded, breathless, disarmed, but still uttering loud defiance, was a prisoner in the fortress of his kinsman.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSITION OF THE SENATOR. — THE WORK OF YEARS. —
THE REWARDS OF AMBITION.

THE indignation of Rienzi may readily be conceived on the return of his herald, mutilated and dishonored. His temper, so naturally stern, was rendered yet more hard by the remembrance of his wrongs and trials; and the result which attended his overtures of conciliation to Stefanello Colonna stung him to the soul.

The bell of the Capitol tolled to arms within ten minutes after the return of the herald; the great gonfalon of Rome was unfurled on the highest tower; and the very evening after Adrian's arrest, the forces of the Senator, headed by Rienzi in person, were on the road to Palestrina. The troopers of the Barons had, however, made incursions as far as Tivoli with the supposed connivance of the inhabitants, and Rienzi halted at that beautiful spot to raise recruits and receive the allegiance of the suspected, while his soldiers, with Arimbaldo and Brettone at their head, went in search of the marauders. The brothers of Montreal returned late at night with the intelligence that the troopers of the Barons had secured themselves amidst the recesses of the wood of Pantano.

The red spot mounted to Rienzi's brow. He gazed hard at Brettone, who stated the news to him, and a natural suspicion shot across his mind.

"How, escaped?" he said. "Is it possible? Enough of such idle skirmishes with these lordly robbers! Will the hour ever come when I shall meet them hand to hand? Brettone," and the brother of Montreal felt the dark eye of Rienzi pierce to his very heart, "Brettone!" said he, with an abrupt change of voice, "are your men to be *trusted*? Is there no connivance with the Barons?"

"How?" said Brettone, sullenly, but somewhat confused.

"How me no hows!" quoth the Tribune-Senator, fiercely. "I know that thou art a valiant captain of valiant men. Thou and thy brother Arimbaldo have served me well, and I have rewarded ye well. Have I not? Speak!"

"Senator," answered Arimbaldo, taking up the word, "you have kept your word to us. You have raised us to the highest rank your power could bestow, and this has amply atoned our humble services."

"I am glad ye allow thus much," said the Tribune.

Arimbaldo proceeded, somewhat more loftily, "I trust, my lord, you do not doubt us?"

"Arimbaldo," replied Rienzi, in a voice of deep, but half-suppressed emotion; "you are a lettered man, and you have seemed to share my projects for the regeneration of our common

kind. *You* ought not to betray me. There is something in unison between *us*. But chide me not; I am surrounded by treason, and the very air I breathe seems poison to my lips."

There was a pathos mingled with Rienzi's words which touched the milder brother of Montreal. He bowed in silence. Rienzi surveyed him wistfully, and sighed. Then, changing the conversation, he spoke of their intended siege of Palestrina, and shortly afterwards retired to rest.

Left alone, the brothers regarded each other for some moments in silence. "Brettone," said Arimbaldo at length, in a whispered voice, "my heart misgives me. I like not Walter's ambitious schemes. With our own countrymen we are frank and loyal: why play the traitor with this high-souled Roman?"¹

"Tush!" said Brettone. "Our brother's hand of iron alone can sway this turbulent people; and if Rienzi be betrayed, so also are his enemies, the Barons. No more of this! I have tidings from Montreal; he will be in Rome in a few days."

"And then?"

"Rienzi weakened by the Barons (for he must not conquer), the Barons weakened by Rienzi, our Northmen seize the Capitol, and the soldiery, now scattered throughout Italy, will fly to the standard of the Great Captain. Montreal must be first Podesta, then King, of Rome."

Arimbaldo moved restlessly in his seat, and the brethren conferred no more on their projects.

The situation of Rienzi was precisely that which tends the most to sour and to harden the fairest nature. With an intellect capable of the grandest designs, a heart that beat with the loftiest emotions, elevated to the sunny pinnacle of power and surrounded by loud-tongued adulators, he knew not among men a single breast in which he could confide. He was as one on a steep ascent whose footing crumbles, while every bough at which he grasps seems to rot at his touch. He found the

¹ The anonymous biographer of Rienzi makes the following just remark: "Sono li tedeschi, come discendon de la Alemagna, semplici, puri, senza fraude, come si allocano tra' italiani, diventano mastri coduti, viziosi, che sentono ogni malizia" (*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 16).

people more than ever eloquent in his favor, but while they shouted raptures as he passed, not a man was capable of *making a sacrifice for him!* The liberty of a state is never achieved by a single individual; if not the people — if not the greater number — a zealous and fervent minority at least must go hand in hand with him. Rome demanded sacrifices in all who sought the Roman regeneration, — sacrifices of time, ease, and money. The crowd followed the procession of the Senator, but not a single Roman devoted his life, *unpaid*, to his standard; not a single coin was subscribed in the defence of freedom. Against him were arrayed the most powerful and the most ferocious Barons of Italy, each of whom could maintain, at his own cost, a little army of practised warriors. With Rienzi were traders and artificers who were willing to enjoy the fruits of liberty, but not to labor at the soil; who demanded, in return for empty shouts, peace and riches; and who expected that one man was to effect in a day what would be cheaply purchased by the struggle of a generation. All their dark and rude notion of a reformed state was to live unbutchered by the Barons and untaxed by their governors. Rome, I say, gave to her Senator not a free arm, nor a voluntary florin.¹ Well aware of the danger which surrounds the ruler who defends his state by foreign swords, the fondest wish and the most visionary dream of Rienzi was to revive amongst the Romans, in their first enthusiasm at his return, an organized and voluntary force, who in protecting him would protect themselves, — not, as before, in his first power, a *nominal* force of twenty thousand men who at any hour might yield (as they did yield) to one hundred and fifty, but a regular, well-disciplined, and trusty body, numerous enough to resist aggression, not numerous enough to become themselves the aggressors.

Hitherto all his private endeavors, his public exhortations, had failed; the crowd listened, shouted, saw him quit the city to meet their tyrants, and returned to their shops saying to each other, "What a great man!"

The character of Rienzi has chiefly received for its judges

¹ This plain fact is thoroughly borne out by every authority

men of the closet, who speculate upon human beings as if they were machines; who gauge the great, not by their merit, but their success; and who have censured or sneered at the Tribune where they should have condemned the People! Had but one half the spirit been found in Rome which ran through a single vein of Cola di Rienzi, the august Republic, if not the majestic empire, of Rome, might be existing now! Turning from the people, the Senator saw his rude and savage troops, accustomed to the license of a tyrant's camp, and under commanders in whom it was ruin really to confide, whom it was equal ruin openly to distrust. Hemmed in on every side by dangers, his character daily grew more restless, vigilant, and stern; and still, with all the aims of the patriot, he felt all the curses of the tyrant. Without the rough and hardening career which, through a life of warfare, had brought Cromwell to a similar power, with more of grace and intellectual softness in his composition, he resembled that yet greater man in some points of character, — in his religious enthusiasm; his rigid justice, often forced by circumstance into severity, but never wantonly cruel or bloodthirsty; in his singular pride of country; and his mysterious command over the minds of others. But he resembled the giant Englishman far more in circumstance than original nature, and that circumstance assimilated their characters at the close of their several careers. Like Cromwell, beset by secret or open foes, the assassin's dagger ever gleamed before his eyes, and his stout heart, unawed by real, trembled at imagined, terrors. The countenance changing suddenly from red to white; the blood-shot, restless eye, belying the composed majesty of mien; the muttering lips, the broken slumber, the secret corselet, — these to both were the rewards of Power!

The elasticity of youth had left the Tribune. His frame, which had endured so many shocks, had contracted a painful disease in the dungeon at Avignon;¹ his high soul still supported him, but the nerves gave way. Tears came readily into his eyes, and often, like Cromwell, he was thought to weep

¹ Dicea che ne la prigione era stato ascarmato. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

from hypocrisy, when in truth it was the hysteric of overwrought and irritable emotion. In all his former life singularly temperate,¹ he now fled from his goading thoughts to the beguiling excitement of wine. He drank deep, though its effects were never visible upon him except in a freer and wilder mood, and the indulgence of that racy humor, half mirthful, half bitter, for which his younger days had been distinguished. Now the mirth had more loudness, but the bitterness more gall.

Such were the characteristics of Rienzi at his return to power, made more apparent with every day. Nina he still loved with the same tenderness, and, if possible, she adored him more than ever; but the zest and freshness of triumphant ambition gone, somehow or other, their intercourse together had not its old charm. Formerly they talked constantly of the *future*, — of the bright days in store for them. Now, with a sharp and uneasy pang, Rienzi turned from all thought of that "gay to-morrow." There was no "gay to-morrow" for him! Dark and thorny as was the present hour, all beyond seemed yet less cheering and more ominous. Still he had some moments, brief but brilliant, when, forgetting the iron race amongst whom he was thrown, he plunged into scholastic reveries of the worshipped Past, and half fancied that he was of a People worthy of his genius and his devotion. Like most men who have been preserved through great dangers, he continued with increasing fondness to nourish a credulous belief in the grandeur of his own destiny. He could not imagine that he had been so delivered, and for no end! He was the Elected, and therefore the Instrument of Heaven. And thus that Bible, which in his loneliness, his wanderings, and his prison had been his solace and support, was more than ever needed in his greatness.

It was another cause of sorrow and chagrin to one who, amidst such circumstances of public danger, required so pecu-

¹ Solea prima esser sobrio, temperato, astinente, ora è diventato distemperatissimo bevitore, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

At first he used to be sober, temperate, abstinent; now he is become a most intemperate drinker, etc. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

liarly the support and sympathy of private friends, that he found he had incurred amongst his old coadjutors the common penalty of absence. A few were dead; others, wearied with the storms of public life, and chilled in their ardor by the turbulent revolutions to which, in every effort for her amelioration, Rome has been subjected, had retired, — some altogether from the city, some from all participation in political affairs. In his halls, the Tribune-Senator was surrounded by unfamiliar faces and a new generation. Of the heads of the popular party, most were animated by a stern dislike to the Pontifical domination, and looked with suspicion and repugnance upon one who, if he governed for the people, had been trusted and honored by the Pope. Rienzi was not a man to forget former friends, however lowly, and had already found time to seek an interview with Cecco del Vecchio. But that stern republican had received him with coldness. His foreign mercenaries and his title of Senator were things that the artisan could not digest. With his usual bluntness, he had said so to Rienzi.

“As for the last,” answered the Tribune, affably, “names do not alter natures. When I forget that to be delegate to the Pontiff is to be the guardian of his flock, forsake me. As for the first, let me but see five hundred Romans sworn to stand armed day and night for the defence of Rome, and I dismiss the Northmen.”

Cecco del Vecchio was unsoftened. Honest, but uneducated, impracticable, and by nature a malcontent, he felt as if he were no longer necessary to the Senator; and this offended his pride. Strange as it may seem, the sullen artisan bore, too, a secret grudge against Rienzi for not having seen and selected him from a crowd of thousands on the day of his triumphal entry. Such are the small offences which produce deep danger to the great!

The artisans still held their meetings, and Cecco del Vecchio's voice was heard loud in grumbling forebodings. But what wounded Rienzi yet more than the alienation of the rest, was the confused and altered manner of his old friend and familiar, Pandulfo di Guido. Missing that popular citizen among those who daily offered their homage at the Capitol, he had sent for

him, and sought in vain to revive their ancient intimacy. Pandulfo affected great respect, but not all the condescension of the Senator could conquer his distance and his restraint. In fact, Pandulfo had learned to form ambitious projects of his own; and but for the return of Rienzi, Pandulfo di Guido felt that he might now, with greater safety, and indeed with some connivance from the Barons, have been the Tribune of the People. The facility to rise into popular eminence which a disordered and corrupt state, unblessed by a regular constitution, offers to ambition, breeds the jealousy and the rivalry which destroy union and rot away the ties of party.

Such was the situation of Rienzi; and yet, wonderful to say, he seemed to be adored by the multitude, and law and liberty, life and death, were in his hands!

Of all those who attended his person, Angelo Villani was the most favored; that youth, who had accompanied Rienzi in his long exile, had also, at the wish of Nina, attended him from Avignon, through his sojourn in the camp of Alborno. His zeal, intelligence, and frank and evident affection blinded the Senator to the faults of his character, and established him more and more in the gratitude of Rienzi. He loved to feel that one faithful heart beat near him, and the page, raised to the rank of his chamberlain, always attended his person and slept in his ante-chamber.

Retiring that night, at Tivoli, to the apartment prepared for him, the Senator sat down by the open casement, through which were seen, waving in the starlight, the dark pines that crowned the hills, while the stillness of the hour gave to his ear the dash of the waterfalls heard above the regular and measured tread of the sentinels below. Leaning his cheek upon his hand, Rienzi long surrendered himself to gloomy thought, and when he looked up, he saw the bright blue eye of Villani fixed in anxious sympathy on his countenance.

"Is my lord unwell?" asked the young chamberlain, hesitating.

"Not so, my Angelo, but somewhat sick at heart. Methinks, for a September night, the air is chill! Angelo," resumed Rienzi, who had already acquired that uneasy curiosity which

belongs to an uncertain power, — “Angelo, bring me hither yon writing implements. Hast thou heard aught what the men say of our probable success against Palestrina?”

“Would my lord wish to learn all their gossip, whether it please or not?” answered Villani.

“If I studied only to hear what pleased me, Angelo, I should never have returned to Rome.”

“Why, then, I heard a constable of the Northmen say, meaningly, that the place will not be carried.”

“Humph! And what said the captains of my Roman legion?”

“My lord, I have heard it whispered that they fear defeat less than they do the revenge of the Barons if they are successful.”

“And with such tools the living race of Europe and misjudging posterity will deem that the workman is to shape out the Ideal and the Perfect! Bring me yon Bible.”

As Angelo reverently brought to Rienzi the sacred book, he said: “Just before I left my companions below, there was a rumor that the Lord Adrian Colonna had been imprisoned by his kinsman.”

“I too heard, and I believe, as much,” returned Rienzi; “these Barons would gibbet their own children in irons if there were any chance of the shackles growing rusty for want of prey. But the wicked shall be brought low, and their strong places shall be made desolate.”

“I would, my lord,” said Villani, “that our Northmen had other captains than these Provençals.”

“Why?” asked Rienzi, abruptly.

“Have the creatures of the Captain of the Grand Company ever held faith with any man whom it suited the avarice or the ambition of Montreal to betray? Was he not, a few months ago, the right arm of John di Vico, and did he not sell his services to John di Vico’s enemy, the Cardinal Albornoz? These warriors barter men as cattle.”

“Thou describest Montreal rightly: a dangerous and an awful man. But methinks his brothers are of a duller and meaner kind; they dare not the crimes of the Robber Captain.

Howbeit, Angelo, thou hast touched a string that will make discord with sleep to-night. Fair youth, thy young eyes have need of slumber ; withdraw, and when thou hearest men envy Rienzi, think that — ”

“ God never made Genius to be envied ! ” interrupted Villani, with an energy that overcame his respect. “ We envy not the sun, but rather the valleys that ripen beneath his beams. ”

“ Verily, if I be the sun, ” said Rienzi, with a bitter and melancholy smile, “ I long for night, — and come it will, to the human as to the celestial pilgrim ! Thank Heaven at least that our ambition cannot make us immortal ! ”

CHAPTER V.

THE BITER BIT.

THE next morning, when Rienzi descended to the room where his captains awaited him, his quick eye perceived that a cloud still lowered upon the brow of Messere Brettone. Arimbald, sheltered by the recess of the rude casement shunned his eye.

“ A fair morning, gentles, ” said Rienzi ; “ the sun laughs upon our enterprise. I have messengers from Rome betimes, — fresh troops will join us ere noon. ”

“ I am glad, Senator, ” answered Brettone, “ that you have tidings which will counteract the ill of those I have to narrate to thee. The soldiers murmur loudly : their pay is due to them ; and I fear me that without money they will not march to Palestrina. ”

“ As they will, ” returned Rienzi, carelessly. “ It is but a few days since they entered Rome ; pay did they receive in advance, — if they demand more, the Colonna and Orsini may outbid me. Draw off your soldiers, Sir Knight, and farewell. ”

Brettone’s countenance fell ; it was his object to get Rienzi more and more in his power, and he wished not to suffer him

to gain that strength which would accrue to him from the fall of Palestrina: the indifference of the Senator foiled and entrapped him in his own net.

"That must not be," said the brother of Montreal, after a confused silence; "we cannot leave you thus to your enemies. The soldiers, it is true, demand pay —"

"And should have it," said Rienzi. "I know these mercenaries, — it is ever with them, mutiny or money. I will throw myself on my Romans, and triumph, — or fall, if so Heaven decrees, with them. Acquaint your constables with my resolve."

Scarce were those words spoken ere, as previously concerted with Bretonne, the chief constable of the mercenaries appeared at the door. "Senator," said he, with a rough semblance of respect, "your orders to march have reached me; I have sought to marshal my men, but —"

"I know what thou wouldst say, friend," interrupted Rienzi, waving his hand. "Messere Brettone will give you my reply. Another time, Sir Captain, more ceremony with the Senator of Rome. You may withdraw."

The unforeseen dignity of Rienzi rebuked and abashed the constable; he looked at Brettone, who motioned him to depart. He closed the door and withdrew.

"What is to be done?" said Brettone.

"Sir Knight," replied Rienzi, gravely, "let us understand each other. Would you serve me, or not? If the first, you are not my equal, but subordinate — and you must obey, and not dictate; if the last, my debt to you shall be discharged, and the world is wide enough for both."

"We have declared allegiance to you," answered Brettone, "and it shall be given."

"One caution before I re-accept your fealty," replied Rienzi, very slowly. "For an open foe, I have my sword; for a traitor, mark me, Rome has the axe: of the first, I have no fear; for the last, no mercy."

"These are not words that should pass between friends," said Brettone, turning pale with suppressed emotion.

"Friends! Ye are my friends, then? — your hands!

Friends, so ye are, and shall prove it! Dear Arimbaldo, thou, like myself, art book-learned, — a clerkly soldier. Dost thou remember how in the Roman history it is told that the Treasury lacked money for the soldiers? The Consul convened the nobles. ‘Ye,’ said he, ‘that have the offices and dignity should be the first to pay for them.’ Ye heed me, my friends; the nobles took the hint, they found the money, — the army was paid. This example is not lost on you. I have made you the leaders of my force, Rome hath showered her honors on you. Your generosity shall commence the example which the Romans shall thus learn of strangers. Ye gaze at me, *my friends!* I read your noble souls, and thank ye beforehand. Ye have the dignity and the office; ye have also the wealth! — pay the hirelings, pay them!”¹

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Brettone, he could not have been more astounded than at this simple suggestion of Rienzi’s. He lifted his eyes to the Senator’s face, and saw there that smile which he had already, bold as he was, learned to dread. He felt himself fairly sunk in the pit he had dugged for another. There was that in the Senator-Tribune’s brow that told him to refuse was to declare open war; and the moment was not ripe for that.

“Ye accede,” said Rienzi; “ye have done well.”

The Senator clapped his hands; his guard appeared.

“Summon the head constables of the soldiery.”

The brothers still remained dumb.

The constables entered.

“My friends,” said Rienzi, “Messere Brettone and Messere Arimbaldo have my directions to divide amongst your force a thousand florins. This evening we encamp beneath Palestrina.”

The constables withdrew in visible surprise. Rienzi gazed a moment on the brothers, chuckling within himself, for his sarcastic humor enjoyed his triumph. “You lament not your devotion, *my friends?*”

“No,” said Brettone, rousing himself; “the sum but trivially swells our debt.”

“Frankly said; your hands once more! The good people

¹ See the Anonymous Biographer, lib. ii. cap. 19.

of Tivoli expect me in the Piazza; they require some admonitions. Adieu till noon."

When the door closed on Rienzi, Brettone struck the handle of his sword fiercely. "The Roman laughs at us," said he. "But let Walter de Montreal once appear in Rome, and the proud jester shall pay us dearly for this."

"Hush!" said Arimbaldo; "walls have ears, and that imp of Satan, young Villani, seems to me ever at our heels!"

"A thousand florins! I trust his heart hath as many drops," growled the chafed Brettone, unheeding his brother.

The soldiers were paid, the army marched; the eloquence of the Senator had augmented his force by volunteers from Tivoli, and wild and half-armed peasantry joined his standard from the Campagna and the neighboring mountains.

Palestrina was besieged; Rienzi continued dexterously to watch the brothers of Montreal. Under pretext of imparting to the Italian volunteers the advantage of their military science, he separated them from their mercenaries, and assigned to them the command of the less disciplined Italians, with whom, he believed, they could not venture to tamper. He himself assumed the lead of the Northmen; and, despite themselves, they were fascinated by his artful, yet dignified affability, and the personal courage he displayed in some sallies of the besieged Barons. But as the huntsmen upon all the subtlest windings of their prey, so pressed the relentless and speeding Fates upon Cola di Rienzi.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVENTS GATHER TO THE END.

WHILE this the state of the camp of the besiegers, Luca di Savelli and Stefanello Colonna were closeted with a stranger who had privately entered Palestrina on the night before the Romans pitched their tents beneath its walls. This visitor, who

might have somewhat passed his fortieth year, yet retained, scarcely diminished, the uncommon beauty of form and countenance for which his youth had been remarkable. But it was no longer that character of beauty which has been described in his first introduction to the reader; it was no longer the almost woman delicacy of feature and complexion, or the high-born polish and graceful suavity of manner which distinguished Walter de Montreal: a life of vicissitude and war had at length done its work. His bearing was now abrupt and imperious, as that of one accustomed to rule wild spirits, and he had exchanged the grace of persuasion for the sternness of command. His athletic form had grown more spare and sinewy, and instead of the brow half shaded by fair and clustering curls, his forehead, though yet but slightly wrinkled, was completely bald at the temples, and by its unwonted height, increased the dignity and manliness of his aspect. The bloom of his complexion was faded, less by outward exposure than inward thought, into a bronzed and settled paleness; and his features seemed more marked and prominent, as the flesh had somewhat sunk from the contour of the cheek. Yet the change suited the change of age and circumstance; and if the Provençal now less realized the idea of the brave and fair knight-errant, he but looked the more what the knight-errant had become, — the sagacious counsellor and the mighty leader.

"You must be aware," said Montreal, continuing a discourse which appeared to have made great impression on his companions, "that in this contest between yourselves and the Senator I alone hold the balance. Rienzi is utterly in my power: my brothers the leaders of his army; myself his creditor. It rests with me to secure him on the throne or to send him to the scaffold. I have but to give the order, and the Grand Company enter Rome; but without their agency methinks if you keep faith with me, our purpose can be effected."

"In the meanwhile, Palestrina is besieged by your brothers!" said Stefanello, sharply.

"But they have my orders to waste their time before its walls. Do you not see that by this very siege, fruitless as, if

I will, it shall be, Rienzi loses fame abroad and popularity in Rome ? ”

“ Sir Knight,” said Luca di Savelli, “ you speak as a man versed in the profound policy of the times ; and under all the circumstances which menace us, your proposal seems but fitting and reasonable. On the one hand, you undertake to restore us and the other Barons to Rome, and to give Rienzi to the Staircase of the Lion — ”

“ Not so, not so,” replied Montreal, quickly ; “ I will consent either so to subdue and cripple his power as to render him a puppet in our hands, a mere shadow of authority ; or, if his proud spirit chafe at its cage, to give it once more liberty amongst the wilds of Germany. I would fetter or banish him, but not destroy, unless,” added Montreal, after a moment’s pause, “ fate absolutely drives us to it. Power should not demand victims ; but to secure it, victims may be necessary.”

“ I understand your refinements,” said Luca di Savelli, with his icy smile, “ and am satisfied. The Barons once restored, our palaces once more manned, and I am willing to take the chance of the Senator’s longevity. This service you promise to effect ? ”

“ I do.”

“ And, in return, you demand our assent to your enjoying the rank of Podesta for five years ? ”

“ You say right.”

“ I, for one, accede to the terms,” said the Savelli ; “ there is my hand. I am wearied of these brawls, even amongst ourselves, and think that a foreign ruler may best enforce order ; the more especially if, like you, Sir Knight, one whose birth and renown are such as to make him comprehend the difference between Barons and Plebeians.”

“ For my part,” said Stefanello, “ I feel that we have but a choice of evils : I like not a foreign Podesta, but I like a plebeian Senator still less. There too is my hand, Sir Knight.”

“ Noble Signors,” said Montreal, after a short pause, and turning his piercing gaze from one to the other with great deliberation, “ our compact is sealed : one word by way of

codicil. Walter de Montreal is no Count Pepin of Minorbino? Once before, — little dreaming, I own, that the victory would be so facile, — I intrusted your cause and mine to a deputy; your cause he promoted, mine he lost. He drove out the Tribune, and then suffered the Barons to banish himself. This time I see to my own affairs. And, mark you, I have learned in the Grand Company one lesson; namely, never to pardon spy or deserter, of whatever rank. Your forgiveness for the hint. Let us change the theme. So ye detain in your fortress my old friend the Baron di Castello?"

"Ay," said Luca di Savelli, for Stefanello, stung by Montreal's threat, which he dared not openly resent, preserved a sullen silence; "ay, he is one noble the less to the Senator's council."

"You act wisely. I know his views and temper, — at present dangerous to our interests. Yet use him well, I entreat you; he may hereafter serve us. And now, my lords, my eyes are weary; suffer me to retire. Pleasant dreams of the New Revolution to us all!"

"By your leave, noble Montreal, we will attend you to your couch," said Luca di Savelli.

"By my troth, and ye shall not. I am no Tribune to have great signors for my pages, but a plain gentleman and a hardy soldier; your attendants will conduct me to whatever chamber your hospitality assigns to one who could sleep soundly beneath the rudest hedge under your open skies."

Savelli, however, insisted on conducting the Podesta that was to be to his apartment. He then returned to Stefanello, whom he found pacing the saloon with long and disordered strides.

"What have we done, Savelli?" said he quickly, — "sold our city to a barbarian!"

"Sold!" said Savelli; "to my mind it is the other part of the contract in which we have played our share. We have bought, Colonna, not sold, — bought our lives from yon army; bought our power, our fortunes, our castles, from the Demagogue Senator; bought what is better than all, — triumph and revenge. Tush, Colonna! see you not that if we had balked this

great warrior we had perished? Leagued with the Senator, the Grand Company would have marched to Rome; and whether Montreal assisted or murdered Rienzi, — for methinks he is a Romulus who would brook no Remus, — *we* had equally been undone. *Now*, we have made our own terms, and our shares are equal. Nay, the first steps to be taken are in our favor. Rienzi is to be snared, and *we* are to enter Rome.”

“And then the Provençal is to be Despot of the city.”

“Podesta, if you please. Podestas who offend the people are often banished, and sometimes stoned; Podestas who insult the nobles are often stilettoed, and sometimes poisoned,” said Savelli. “‘Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ Meanwhile, say nothing to the bear Orsini. Such men mar all wisdom. Come, cheer thee, Stefanello.”

“Luca di Savelli, you have not such a stake in Rome as I have,” said the young lord, haughtily; “no Podesta can take from *you* the rank of the first Signor of the Italian metropolis!”

“An you had said so to the Orsini there would have been drawing of swords,” said Savelli. “But cheer thee, I say; is not our first care to destroy Rienzi? And then, between the death of one foe and the rise of another, are there not such preventives as Ezzelino de Romano has taught to wary men? Cheer thee, I say; and, next year, if we but hold together, Stefanello Colonna and Luca di Savelli will be joint Senators of Rome, and these great men food for worms!”

While thus conferred the Barons, Montreal, ere he retired to rest, stood gazing from the open lattice of his chamber over the landscape below, which slept in the autumnal moonlight, while at a distance gleamed, pale and steady, the lights round the encampment of the besiegers.

“Wide plains and broad valleys,” thought the warrior, “soon shall ye repose in peace beneath a new sway, against which no petty tyrant shall dare rebel. And ye, white walls of canvas, even while I gaze, *ye* admonish me how realms are won. Even as, of old, from the Nomad tents was built up the stately Babylon¹ that ‘was not till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness,’ so by the new Ishmae-

¹ Isaiah xxii.

lites of Europe shall a race, undreamed of now, be founded, and the camp of yesterday be the city of to-morrow. Verily, when, for one soft offence, the Pontiff thrust me from the bosom of the Church, little guessed he what enemy he raised to Rome! How solemn is the night; how still the heavens and earth! The very stars are as hushed as if intent on the events that are to pass below! So solemn and so still feels mine own spirit, and an awe unknown till now warns me that I approach the crisis of my daring fate!"

BOOK X.

THE LION OF BASALT.

ORA voglio contare la morte del Tribuno. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 24.

Now will I narrate the death of the Tribune. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONJUNCTION OF HOSTILE PLANETS IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

ON the fourth day of the siege, and after beating back to those almost impregnable walls the soldiery of the Barons, headed by the Prince of the Orsini, the Senator returned to his tent, where despatches from Rome awaited him. He ran his eye hastily over them, till he came to the last; yet each contained news that might have longer delayed the eye of a man less inured to danger. From one he learned that Albornoz, whose blessing had confirmed to him the rank of Senator, had received with special favor the messengers of the Orsini and Colonna. He knew that the Cardinal, whose views connected him with the Roman Patricians, desired his downfall; but he feared not Albornoz, — perhaps in his secret heart he wished that any open aggression from the Pontiff's Legate might throw him wholly on the people.

He learned further that, short as had been his absence, Pandulfo di Guido had twice addressed the populace, not in favor of the Senator, but in artful regrets of the loss to the trade of Rome in the absence of her wealthiest nobles.

"For this, then, he has deserted me," said Rienzi to himself. "Let him beware!"

The tidings contained in the next touched him home: Walter de Montreal had openly arrived in Rome. The grasping and lawless bandit, whose rapine filled with a robber's booty every bank in Europe; whose Company was the army of a King, whose ambition, vast, unprincipled, and profound, he so well knew; whose brothers were in his camp, their treason already more than suspected, — Walter de Montreal was in Rome!

The Senator remained perfectly aghast at this new peril; and then said, setting his teeth as in a vice, —

“Wild tiger, thou art in the Lion's den!” Then pausing, he broke out again, “One false step, Walter de Montreal, and all the mailed hands of the Grand Company shall not pluck thee from the abyss! But what can I do? Return to Rome, the plans of Montreal unpenetrated, no accusation against him! On what pretence can I with honor raise the siege? To leave Palestrina is to give a triumph to the Barons, to abandon Adrian, to degrade my cause. Yet, while away from Rome, every hour breeds treason and danger. Pandulfo, Alborno, Montreal, — all are at work against me. A keen and trusty spy, now. — Ha! well thought of, — Villani. What, ho, Angelo Villani!”

The young chamberlain appeared.

“I think,” said Rienzi, “to have often heard that thou art an orphan?”

“True, my lord; the old Augustine nun who reared my boyhood has told me again and again that my parents are dead. Both noble, my lord; but I am the child of shame. And I say it often, and think of it ever, in order to make Angelo Villani remember that he has a name to win.”

“Young man, serve me as you have served, and if I live you shall have no need to call yourself an orphan. Mark me! I want a friend, — the Senator of Rome wants a friend; only one friend, gentle Heaven, only one!”

Angelo sank on his knee and kissed the mantle of his lord.

“Say a follower. I am too mean to be Rienzi's friend.”

“Too mean? Go to! There is nothing mean before God, unless it be a base soul under high titles. With me, boy,

there is but one nobility, and Nature signs its charter. Listen : thou hearest daily of Walter de Montreal, brother to these Provençals, — great captain of great robbers ? ”

“ Ay, and I have seen him, my lord ! ”

“ Well, then, he is in Rome. Some daring thought, some well-supported and deep-schemed villany, could alone make that bandit venture openly into an Italian city whose territories he ravaged by fire and sword a few months back. But his brothers have lent me money, assisted my return, — for their own ends, it is true ; but the seeming obligation gives them real power. These Northern swordsmen would cut my throat if the Great Captain bade them. He counts on my supposed weakness. I know him of old. I suspect — nay, I read — his projects, but I cannot prove them. Without proof, I cannot desert Palestrina in order to accuse and seize him. Thou art shrewd, thoughtful, acute : couldst thou go to Rome, watch day and night his movements, see if he receive messengers from Albornoz or the Barons, if he confer with Pandulfo di Guido, — watch his lodgment, I say, night and day ? He affects no concealment ; your task will be less difficult than it seems. Apprise the Signora of all you learn. Give me your news daily. Will you undertake this mission ? ”

“ I will, my lord.”

“ To horse, then, quick ! And mind, — save the wife of my bosom, I have no confidant in Rome.”

CHAPTER II.

MONTREAL AT ROME. — HIS RECEPTION OF ANGELO VILLANI.

THE danger that threatened Rienzi by the arrival of Montreal was indeed formidable. The Knight of St. John, having marched his army into Lombardy, had placed it at the disposal of the Venetian State in its war with the Archbishop of Milan. For this service he received an immense sum, while he provided winter quarters for his troop, for whom he proposed

ample work in the ensuing spring. Leaving Palestrina secretly and in disguise, with but a slender train, which met him at Tivoli, Montreal repaired to Rome. His ostensible object was partly to congratulate the Senator on his return, partly to receive the moneys lent to Rienzi by his brother.

His secret object we have partly seen; but not contented with the support of the Barons, he trusted, by the corrupting means of his enormous wealth, to form a third party in support of his own ulterior designs. Wealth, indeed, in that age and in that land was scarcely less the purchaser of diadems than it had been in the later days of the Roman Empire. And in many a city, torn by hereditary feuds, the hatred of faction rose to that extent that a foreign tyrant, willing and able to expel one party, might obtain at least the temporary submission of the other. His after-success was greatly in proportion to his power to maintain his state by a force which was independent of the citizens, and by a treasury which did not require the odious recruit of taxes. But more avaricious than ambitious, more cruel than firm, it was by griping exaction or unnecessary bloodshed that such usurpers usually fell.

Montreal, who had scanned the frequent revolutions of the time with a calm and investigating eye, trusted that he should be enabled to avoid both these errors; and, as the reader has already seen, he had formed the profound and sagacious project of consolidating his usurpation by an utterly new race of nobles, who, serving him by the feudal tenure of the North, and ever ready to protect him, because in so doing they protected their own interests, should assist to erect, not the rotten and unsupported fabric of a single tyranny, but the strong fortress of a new, hardy, and compact Aristocratic State. Thus had the great dynasties of the North been founded, in which a King, though seemingly curbed by the Barons, was in reality supported by a common interest, whether against a subdued population or a foreign invasion.

Such were the vast schemes — extending into yet wider fields of glory and conquest, bounded only by the Alps — with which the Captain of the Grand Company beheld the columns and arches of the Seven-hilled city.

No fear disturbed the long current of his thoughts. His brothers were the leaders of Rienzi's hireling army; that army were his creatures. Over Rienzi himself he assumed the right of a creditor. Thus against one party he deemed himself secure. For the friends of the Pope, he had supported himself with private, though cautious, letters from Alborno, who desired only to make use of him for the return of the Roman Barons; and with the heads of the latter we have already witnessed his negotiations. Thus was he fitted, as he thought, to examine, to tamper with all parties, and to select from each the materials necessary for his own objects.

The open appearance of Montreal excited in Rome no inconsiderable sensation. The friends of the Barons gave out that Rienzi was in league with the Grand Company, and that he was to sell the Imperial City to the plunder and pillage of Barbarian robbers. The effrontery with which Montreal (against whom, more than once, the Pontiff had thundered his bulls) appeared in the Metropolitan City of the Church was made yet more insolent by the recollection of that stern justice which had led the Tribune to declare open war against all the robbers of Italy; and this audacity was linked with the obvious reflection that the brothers of the bold Provençal were the instruments of Rienzi's return. So quickly spread suspicion through the city that Montreal's presence alone would in a few weeks have sufficed to ruin the Senator. Meanwhile, the natural boldness of Montreal silenced every whisper of prudence; and, blinded by the dazzle of his hopes, the Knight of St. John, as if to give double importance to his coming, took up his residence in a sumptuous palace, and his retinue rivalled, in the splendor of garb and pomp, the display of Rienzi himself in his earlier and more brilliant power.

Amidst the growing excitement, Angelo Villani arrived at Rome. The character of this young man had been formed by his peculiar circumstances. He possessed qualities which often mark the illegitimate as with a common stamp. He was insolent, like most of those who hold a doubtful rank; and while ashamed of his bastardy, was arrogant of the supposed nobility of his unknown parentage. The universal ferment and agitation

of Italy at that day rendered ambition the most common of all the passions; and thus ambition, in all its many shades and varieties, forces itself into our delineations of character in this history. Though not for Angelo Villani were the dreams of the more lofty and generous order of that sublime infirmity, he was strongly incited by the desire and resolve to *rise*. He had warm affections and grateful impulses, and his fidelity to his patron had been carried to a virtue; but from his irregular and desultory education, and the reckless profligacy of those with whom, in ante-chambers and guard-rooms, much of his youth had been passed, he had neither high principles nor an enlightened honor. Like most Italians, cunning and shrewd, he scrupled not at any deceit that served a purpose or a friend. His strong attachment to Rienzi had been unconsciously increased by the gratification of pride and vanity, flattered by the favor of so celebrated a man. Both self-interest and attachment urged him to every effort to promote the views and safety of one at once his benefactor and patron; and on undertaking his present mission, his only thought was to fulfil it with the most complete success. Far more brave and daring than was common with the Italians, something of the hardihood of an Ultramontane race gave nerve and vigor to his craft; and from what his art suggested, his courage never shrank.

When Rienzi had first detailed to him the objects of his present task, he instantly called to mind his adventure with the tall soldier in the crowd at Avignon. "If ever thou wantest a friend, seek him in Walter de Montreal," were words that had often rung in his ear, and they now recurred to him with prophetic distinctness. He had no doubt that it was Montreal himself whom he had seen. Why the Great Captain should have taken this interest in him, Angelo little cared to conjecture.

Most probably it was but a crafty pretence, — one of the common means by which the Chief of the Grand Company attracted to himself the youths of Italy as well as the warriors of the North. He only thought now how he could turn the Knight's promise to account. What more easy than to present himself to

Montreal, remind him of the words, enter his service, and thus effectually watch his conduct? The office of spy was not that which would have pleased every mind, but it shocked not the fastidiousness of Angelo Villani; and the fearful hatred with which his patron had often spoken of the avaricious and barbarian robber, — the scourge of his native land, — had infected the young man, who had much of the arrogant and mock patriotism of the Romans, with a similar sentiment. More vindictive even than grateful, he bore, too, a secret grudge against Montreal's brothers, whose rough address had often wounded his pride; and, above all, his early recollections of the fear and execration in which Ursula seemed ever to hold the terrible Fra Moreale, impressed him with a vague belief of some ancient wrong to himself or his race perpetrated by the Provençal, which he was not ill-pleased to have the occasion to avenge. In truth, the words of Ursula, mystic and dark as they were in their denunciation had left upon Villani's boyish impressions an unaccountable feeling of antipathy and hatred to the man it was now his object to betray. For the rest, every device seemed to him decorous and justifiable, so that it saved his master, served his country, and advanced himself.

Montreal was alone in his chamber when it was announced to him that a young Italian craved an audience. Professionally open to access, he forthwith gave admission to the applicant.

The Knight of St. John instantly recognized the page he had encountered at Avignon; and when Angelo Villani said, with easy boldness, "I have come to remind Sir Walter de Montreal of a promise —" the Knight interrupted him with cordial frankness: "Thou needest not, I remember it. Dost thou now require my friendship?"

"I do, noble Signor!" answered Angelo; "I know not where else to seek a patron."

"Canst thou read and write? I fear me not."

"I have been taught those arts," replied Villani.

"It is well. Is thy birth gentle?"

"It is."

"Better still. Thy name?"

"Angelo Villani."

"I take thy blue eyes and low broad brow," said Montreal, with a slight sigh, "in pledge of thy truth. Henceforth, Angelo Villani, thou art in the list of my secretaries. Another time thou shalt tell me more of thyself. Thy service dates from this day. For the rest, no man ever wanted wealth who served Walter de Montreal, nor advancement, if he served him faithfully. My closet, through yonder door, is thy waiting room. Ask for and send hither Lusignan of Lyons; he is my chief scribe, and will see to thy comforts and instruct thee in thy business."

Angelo withdrew; Montreal's eye followed him.

"A strange likeness!" said he, musingly and sadly; "my heart leaps to that boy!"

CHAPTER III.

MONTREAL'S BANQUET.

SOME few days after the date of the last chapter, Rienzi received news from Rome which seemed to produce in him a joyous and elated excitement. His troops still lay before Palestrina, and still the banners of the Barons waved over its unconquered walls. In truth, the Italians employed half their time in brawls amongst themselves; the Velletritrani had feuds with the people of Tivoli, and the Romans were still afraid of conquering the Barons. "The hornet," said they, "stings worse after he is dead; and neither an Orsini, a Savelli, nor a Colonna was ever known to forgive."

Again and again had the captains of his army assured the indignant Senator that the fortress was impregnable, and that time and money were idly wasted upon the siege. Rienzi knew better, but he concealed his thoughts.

He now summoned to his tent the brothers of Provence, and announced to them his intention of returning instantly to Rome. "The mercenaries shall continue the siege under our lieutenant,

and you, with my Roman Legion, shall accompany me. Your brother, Sir Walter, and I, both want your presence; we have affairs to arrange between us. After a few days I shall raise recruits in the city and return."

This was what the brothers desired; they approved, with evident joy, the Senator's proposition.

Rienzi next sent for the lieutenant of his body-guard, the same Riccardo Annibaldi whom the reader will remember in the earlier part of this work as the antagonist of Montreal's lance. This young man — one of the few nobles who espoused the cause of the Senator — had evinced great courage and military ability, and promised fair (should Fate spare his life)¹ to become one of the best captains of his time.

"Dear Annibaldi," said Rienzi, "at length I can fulfil the project on which we have privately conferred. I take with me to Rome the two Provençal captains, I leave you chief of the army. Palestrina will yield now — eh! — ha, ha, ha! — Palestrina will yield now!"

"By my right hand, I think so, Senator," replied Annibaldi. "These foreigners have hitherto only stirred up quarrels amongst ourselves, and if not cowards are certainly traitors!"

"Hush, hush, hush! Traitors! The learned Arimbaldo, the brave Brettone, traitors! Fie on it! No, no; they are very excellent, honorable men, but not lucky in the camp; not lucky in the camp. Better speed to them in the city! And now to business."

The Senator then detailed to Annibaldi the plan he himself had formed for taking the town, and the military skill of Annibaldi at once recognized its feasibility.

With his Roman troop and Montreal's brothers, one at either hand, Rienzi then departed to Rome.

That night Montreal gave a banquet to Pandulfo di Guido and to certain of the principal citizens, whom one by one he had already sounded, and found hollow at heart to the cause of the Senator.

¹ It appears that this was the same Annibaldi who was afterwards slain in an affray; Petrarch lauds his valor and laments his fate.

Pandulfo sat at the right hand of the Knight of St. John, and Montreal lavished upon him the most courteous attentions.

"Pledge me in this, — it is from the Vale of Chiana, near Monte Pulciano," said Montreal. "I think I have heard bookmen say (you know, Signor Pandulfo, we ought all to be bookmen now!) that the site was renowned of old. In truth, the wine hath a racy flavor."

"I hear," said Bruttini, one of the lesser Barons (a stanch friend to the Colonna), "that in this respect the innkeeper's son has put his book-learning to some use: he knows every place where the wine grows richest."

"What, the Senator is turned wine-bibber!" said Montreal, quaffing a vast gobletful; "that must unfit him for business, — 't is a pity."

"Verily, yes," said Pandulfo; "a man at the head of a state should be temperate, — *I* never drink wine unmixed."

"Ah!" whispered Montreal, "if your calm good-sense ruled Rome, then, indeed, the metropolis of Italy might taste of peace. Signor Vivaldi," and the host turned towards a wealthy draper, "these disturbances are bad for trade."

"Very, very!" groaned the draper.

"The Barons are your best customers," quoth the minor noble.

"Much, much!" said the draper.

"'T is a pity that they are thus roughly expelled," said Montreal, in a melancholy tone. "Would it not be possible, if the Senator (*I* drink his health) were less rash, — less zealous, rather, — to unite free institutions with the return of the Barons? *Such* should be the task of a truly wise statesman."

"It surely might be possible," returned Vivaldi; "the Savelli alone spend more with me than all the rest of Rome."

"I know not if it be possible," said Bruttini, "but I do know that it is an outrage to all decorum that an innkeeper's son should be enabled to make a solitude of the palaces of Rome."

"It certainly seems to indicate too vulgar a desire of mob favor," said Montreal. "However, I trust we shall harmo-

nize all these differences. Rienzi perhaps — nay, doubtless — *means* well !”

“I would,” said Vivaldi, who had received his cue, “that we might form a mixed constitution, — Plebeians and Patri-cians, each in their separate order.”

“But,” said Montreal, gravely, “so new an experiment would demand great physical force.”

“Why, true; but we might call in an umpire, — a foreigner who had no interest in either faction — who might protect the new Buono Stato, — a Podesta, as we have done before; Brancalone, for instance. How well and wisely he ruled, — that was a golden age for Rome! A Podesta forever, — that’s my theory!”

“You need not seek far for the president of your council,” said Montreal, smiling at Pandulfo; “a citizen at once popular, well-born, and wealthy may be found at my right hand.”

Pandulfo hemmed and colored.

Montreal proceeded. “A committee of trades might furnish an honorable employment to Signor Vivaldi; and the treatment of all foreign affairs, the employment of armies, etc., might be left to the Barons, — with a more open competition, Signor di Bruttini, to the Barons of the second order than has hitherto been conceded to their birth and importance. Sirs, will you taste the Malvoisie?”

“Still,” said Vivaldi, after a pause (Vivaldi anticipated at least the supplying with cloth the whole of the Grand Company), “still, such a moderate and well-digested constitution would never be acceded to by Rienzi.”

“Why should it? What need of Rienzi?” exclaimed Bruttini. “Rienzi may take another trip to Bohemia.”

“Gently, gently,” said Montreal; “I do not despair. All open violence against the Senator would strengthen his power. No, no; humble him, admit the Barons, and then insist on your own terms. Between the two factions you might then establish a fitting balance. And in order to keep your new constitution from the encroachment of either extreme, there *are* warriors, and knights too, who for a certain rank in the great city of Rome would maintain horse and foot at its ser-

vice. We Ultramontanes are often harshly judged; we are wanderers and Ishmaelites solely because we have no honorable place of rest. Now, if I —”

“Ay, if you, noble Montreal!” said Vivaldi.

The company remained hushed in breathless attention when suddenly there was heard — deep, solemn, muffled — the great bell of the Capitol!

“Hark!” said Vivaldi, “the bell; it tolls for execution, — an unwonted hour!”

“Sure, the Senator has not returned!” exclaimed Pandulfo di Guido, turning pale.

“No, no,” quoth Bruttini, “it is but a robber caught two nights ago in Romagna. I heard that he was to die to-night.”

At the word “robber” Montreal changed countenance slightly. The wine circulated, the bell continued to toll; its suddenness over, it ceased to alarm. Conversation flowed again.

“What were you saying, Sir Knight?” said Vivaldi.

“Why, let me think on’t — Oh! speaking of the necessity of supporting a new state by force, I said that if I —”

“Ah, that was it!” quoth Bruttini, thumping the table.

“If I were summoned to your aid, — *summoned*, mind ye, and absolved by the Pope’s Legate of my former sins (they weigh heavily on me, gentles), I would myself guard your city from foreign foe and civil disturbance, with my gallant swordsmen. Not a Roman citizen should contribute a ‘danaro’ to the cost.”

“*Viva Fra Moreale!*” cried Bruttini; and the shout was echoed by all the boon companions.

“Enough for me,” continued Montreal, “to expiate my offences. Ye know, gentlemen, my order is vowed to God and the Church; a warrior monk am I! Enough for me to expiate my offences, I say, in the defence of the Holy City. Yet I, too, have my private and more earthly views, — who is above them? I — The bell changes its note!”

“It is but the change that preludes execution, — the poor robber is about to die!”

Montreal crossed himself, and resumed: “I am a knight

and a noble," said he, proudly; "the profession I have followed is that of arms: but—I will not disguise it—mine equals have regarded me as one who has stained his scutcheon by too reckless a pursuit of glory and of gain. I wish to reconcile myself with my order, to purchase a new name, to vindicate myself to the Grand Master and the Pontiff. I have had hints, gentles,—hints that I might best promote my interest by restoring order to the Papal metropolis. The Legate Alborno (here is his letter) recommends me to keep watch upon the Senator."

"Surely," interrupted Pandulfo, "I hear steps below."

"The mob going to the robber's execution," said Bruttini; "proceed, Sir Knight!"

"And," continued Montreal, surveying his audience before he proceeded further, "what think ye—I do but ask your opinion, wiser than mine—what think ye, as a fitting precaution against too arbitrary a power in the Senator—what think ye of the return of the Colonna and the bold Barons of Palestrina?"

"Here's to their health!" cried Vivaldi, rising.

As by a sudden impulse, the company rose. "To the health of the besieged Barons!" was shouted aloud.

"Next, what if—I do but humbly suggest—what if you gave the Senator a colleague? It is no affront to him. It was but as yesterday that one of the Colonna, who was Senator, received a colleague in Bertoldo Orsini."

"A most wise precaution," cried Vivaldi. "And where a colleague like Pandulfo di Guido?"

"*Viva Pandulfo di Guido!*" cried the guests; and again their goblets were drained to the bottom.

"And if in this I can assist ye by fair words with the Senator (ye know he owes me moneys,—my brothers have served him) command Walter de Montreal."

"And if fair words fail?" said Vivaldi.

"The Grand Company—heed me, ye are the councillors—the Grand Company is accustomed to forced marches!"

"*Viva Fra Moreale!*" cried Bruttini and Vivaldi, simultaneously. "A health to all, my friends;" continued Bruttini: "a

health to the Barons, Rome's old friends; to Pandulfo di Guido, the Senator's new colleague; and to Fra Moreale, Rome's new Podesta!"

"The bell has ceased," said Vivaldi, putting down his goblet.

"Heaven have mercy on the robber!" added Bruttini.

Scarce had he spoken, ere three taps were heard at the door; the guests looked at each other in dumb amaze.

"New guests!" said Montreal. "I asked some trusty friends to join us this evening. By my faith, they are welcome! Enter!"

The door opened slowly; three by three entered, in complete armor, the guards of the Senator. On they marched, regular and speechless. They surrounded the festive board, they filled the spacious hall, and the lights of the banquet were reflected upon their corselets as on a wall of steel.

Not a syllable was uttered by the feasters; they were as if turned to a stone. Presently the guards gave way, and Rienzi himself appeared. He approached the table, and folding his arms, turned his gaze deliberately from guest to guest, till at last his eyes rested on Montreal, who had also risen, and who alone of the party had recovered the amaze of the moment.

And there, as these two men, each so celebrated, so proud, able, and ambitious, stood front to front, it was literally as if the rival Spirits of Force and Intellect, Order and Strife, of the Falchion and the Fasces, — the Antagonist Principles by which empires are ruled and empires overthrown, — had met together, incarnate and opposed. They stood, both silent, as if fascinated by each other's gaze, loftier in stature and nobler in presence than all around.

Montreal spoke first, and with a forced smile.

"Senator of Rome, dare I believe that my poor banquet tempts thee, and may I trust that these armed men are a graceful compliment to one to whom arms have been a pastime?"

Rienzi answered not, but waved his hand to his guards.

Montreal was seized on the instant. Again he surveyed the guests: as a bird from the rattlesnake, shrank Pandulfo di Guido, trembling, motionless, aghast, from the glittering eye of the Senator. Slowly Rienzi raised his fatal hand towards

the unhappy citizen; Pandulfo saw, felt his doom — shrieked — and fell senseless in the arms of the soldiers.

One other and rapid glance cast the Senator round the board, and then, with a disdainful smile, as if anxious for no meaner prey, turned away. Not a breath had hitherto passed his lips, all had been dumb show, and his grim silence had imparted a more freezing terror to his unguessed-for apparition. Only, when he reached the door, he turned back, gazed upon the Knight of St. John's bold and undaunted face, and said, almost in a whisper, "Walter de Montreal, you heard the death-knell!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENTENCE OF WALTER DE MONTREAL.

IN silence the Captain of the Grand Company was borne to the prison of the Capitol. In the same building lodged the rivals for the government of Rome: the one occupied the prison, the other the palace. The guards forbore the ceremony of fetters, and leaving a lamp on the table, Montreal perceived he was not alone, — his brothers had preceded him.

"We are happily met," said the Knight of St. John; "we have passed together pleasanter nights than this is likely to be."

"Can you jest, Walter?" said Arimbaldo, half-weeping. "Know you not that our doom is fixed? Death scowls upon us."

"Death!" repeated Montreal, and for the first time his countenance changed; perhaps for the first time in his life he felt the thrill and agony of fear.

"Death!" he repeated again. "Impossible! He dare not, Brettone; the soldiers, the Northmen, — they will mutiny, they will pluck us back from the grasp of the headsman!"

"Cast from you so vain a hope," said Brettone, sullenly; "the soldiers are encamped at Palestrina."

"How! Dolt — fool! Came you then to Rome *alone*? Are we *alone* with this dread man?"

"You are the dolt! Why came you hither?" answered the brother.

"Why, indeed, but that I knew thou wast the captain of the army; and — But thou saidst right, — the folly is mine to have played against the crafty Tribune so unequal a brain as thine. Enough! Reproaches are idle. When were ye arrested?"

"At dusk, — the instant we entered the gates of Rome. Rienzi entered privately."

"Humph! What can he know against me? Who can have betrayed me? My secretaries are tried, all trustworthy, except that youth, and he so seemingly zealous, — that Angelo Villani!"

"Villani! Angelo Villani!" cried the brothers in a breath. "Hast thou confided aught to him?"

"Why, I fear he must have seen, at least in part, my correspondence with you and with the Barons, — he was among my scribes. Know you aught of him?"

"Walter, Heaven hath demented you!" returned Brettone. "Angelo Villani is the favorite menial of the Senator."

"Those eyes deceived me then," muttered Montreal, solemnly and shuddering; "and, as if *her* ghost had returned to earth, God smites me from the grave!"

There was a long silence. At length Montreal, whose bold and sanguine temper was never long clouded, spoke again.

"Are the Senator's coffers full? But that is impossible."

"Bare as a Dominican's."

"We are saved, then. He shall name his price for our heads. Money must be more useful to him than blood."

And as if with that thought all further meditation were rendered unnecessary, Montreal doffed his mantle, uttered a short prayer, and flung himself on a pallet in a corner of the cell.

"I have slept on worse beds," said the Knight, stretching himself; and in a few minutes he was fast asleep.

The brothers listened to his deep-drawn, but regular breath-

ing, with envy and wonder, but they were in no mood to converse. Still and speechless, they sat like statues beside the sleeper. Time passed on, and the first cold air of the hour that succeeds to midnight crept through the bars of their cell. The bolts crashed, the door opened, six men-at-arms entered, passed the brothers, and one of them touched Montreal.

"Ha!" said he, still sleeping, but turning round. "Ha!" said he, in the soft Provençal tongue, "sweet Adeline, we will not rise yet, — it is so long since we met!"

"What says he?" muttered the guard, shaking Montreal roughly. The Knight sprang up at once, and his hand grasped the head of his bed as for his sword. He stared round bewildered, rubbed his eyes, and then gazing on the guard, became alive to the present.

"Ye are early risers in the Capitol," said he. "What want ye of me?"

"*It* waits you!"

"*It!* What?" said Montreal.

"The rack!" replied the soldier, with a malignant scowl.

The Great Captain said not a word. He looked for one moment at the six swordsmen, as if measuring his single strength against theirs. His eye then wandered round the room. The rudest bar of iron would have been dearer to him than he had ever yet found the proofest steel of Milan. He completed his survey with a sigh, threw his mantle over his shoulders, nodded at his brethren, and followed the guard.

In a hall of the Capitol, hung with the ominous silk of white rays on a blood-red ground, sat Rienzi and his councillors. Across a recess was drawn a black curtain.

"Walter de Montreal," said a small man at the foot of the table, "Knight of the illustrious order of St. John of Jerusalem —"

"And Captain of the Grand Company!" added the prisoner, in a firm voice.

"You stand accused of divers counts, — robbery and murder in Tuscany, Romagna, and Apulia —"

"For robbery and murder, brave men and belted knights,"

said Montreal, drawing himself up, "would use the words 'war and victory.' To those charges I plead guilty! Proceed."

"You are next accused of treasonable conspiracy against the liberties of Rome for the restoration of the proscribed Barons, and of traitorous correspondence with Stefanello Colonna at Palestrina."

"My accuser?"

"Step forth, Angelo Villani!"

"You are my betrayer then?" said Montreal, steadily. "I deserved this. I beseech you, Senator of Rome, let this young man retire. I confess my correspondence with the Colonna and my desire to restore the Barons."

Rienzi motioned to Villani, who bowed and withdrew.

"There rests only then for you, Walter de Montreal, to relate, fully and faithfully, the details of your conspiracy."

"That is impossible," replied Montreal, carelessly.

"And why?"

"Because, doing as I please with my own life, I will not betray the lives of others."

"Bethink thee, — thou wouldst have betrayed the life of thy judge!"

"Not betrayed; thou didst not trust me."

"The law, Walter de Montreal, hath sharp inquisitors. Behold!"

The black curtain was drawn aside, and the eye of Montreal rested on the executioner and the rack! His proud breast heaved indignantly.

"Senator of Rome," said he, "these instruments are for serfs and villeins. I have been a warrior and a leader; life and death have been in my hands, — I have used them as I listed: but to mine equal and my foe I never proffered the insult of the rack."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," returned the Senator, gravely, but with some courteous respect, "your answer is that which rises naturally to the lips of brave men. But learn from me, whom fortune hath made thy judge, that no more for serf and villein than for knight and noble, are such instruments the engines of law or the tests of truth. I yielded but to the

desire of these reverend councillors to test thy nerves. But wert thou the meanest peasant of the Campagna, before my judgment-seat thou needst not apprehend the torture. Walter de Montreal, among the Princes of Italy thou hast known, among the Roman Barons thou wouldst have aided, is there one who could make that boast?"

"I desired only," said Montreal, with some hesitation, "to unite the Barons *with* thee; nor did I intrigue against thy *life*!"

Rienzi frowned. "Enough," he said hastily. "Knight of St. John, I *know* thy secret projects, — subterfuge and evasion neither befit nor avail thee. If thou didst not intrigue against my life, thou didst intrigue against the life of Rome. Thou hast but one favor left to demand on earth, — it is the manner of thy death."

Montreal's lip worked convulsively.

"Senator," said he, in a low voice, "may I crave audience with thee *alone* for one minute?"

The councillors looked up.

"My lord," whispered the eldest of them, "doubtless he hath concealed weapons, — trust him not."

"Prisoner," returned Rienzi, after a moment's pause, "if thou seekest for mercy, thy request is idle, and before my coadjutors, I have no secret! Speak out what thou hast to say!"

"Yet listen to me," said the prisoner, folding his arms, "it concerns not my life, but Rome's welfare."

"Then," said Rienzi, in an altered tone, "thy request is granted. Thou mayst add to thy guilt the design of the assassin, but for Rome I would dare greater danger."

So saying, he motioned to the councillors, who slowly withdrew by the door which had admitted Villani, while the guards retired to the farthest extremity of the hall.

"Now, Walter de Montreal, be brief, for thy time is short."

"Senator," said Montreal, "my life can but little profit you; men will say that you destroyed your creditor in order to cancel your debt. Fix a sum upon my life, estimate it at the price of a monarch's: every florin shall be paid to you

and your treasury will be filled for five years to come. If the *Buono Stato* depends on your government, what I have asked, your solicitude for Rome will not permit you to refuse."

"You mistake me, bold robber," said Rienzi, sternly; "your *treason* I could guard against, and therefore forgive: your *ambition*, never! Mark me, I know you! Place your hand on your heart and say whether, could we change places, you, as Rienzi, would suffer all the gold of earth to purchase the life of Walter de Montreal? For men's reading of my conduct, that must I bear; for mine own reading, mine eyes must be purged from corruption. I am answerable to God for the trust of Rome. And Rome trembles while the head of the Grand Company lives in the plotting brain and the daring heart of Walter de Montreal. Man, wealthy, great, and subtle as you are, your hours are numbered; with the rise of the sun you die!"

Montreal's eyes, fixed upon the Senator's face, saw hope was over; his pride and his fortitude returned to him.

"We have wasted words," said he. "I played for a great stake, I have lost, and must pay the forfeit! I am prepared. On the threshold of the Unknown World, the dark spirit of prophecy rushes into us. Lord Senator, I go before thee to announce that in heaven or in hell, ere many days be over, room must be given to one mightier than I am!"

As he spoke, his form dilated, his eye glared; and Rienzi, cowering as never he had covered before, shrank back, and shaded his face with his hand.

"The manner of your death?" he asked, in a hollow voice.

"The axe: it is that which befits knight and warrior. For thee, Senator, Fate hath a less noble death."

"Robber, be dumb!" cried Rienzi, passionately. "Guards, bear back the prisoner. At sunrise, Montreal —"

"Sets the sun of the scourge of Italy," said the Knight, bitterly. "Be it so. One request more: the Knights of St. John claim affinity with the Augustine order; grant me an Augustine confessor."

"It is granted; and in return for thy denunciations, I, who

can give thee no earthly mercy, will implore the Judge of all for pardon to thy soul!"

"Senator, I have done with man's mediation. My brethren? Their deaths are not necessary to thy safety or thy revenge!"

Rienzi mused a moment: "No," said he, "dangerous tools they were, but without the workman they may rust unharmed. They served me once too. Prisoner, their lives are spared."

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE Council was broken up; Rienzi hastened to his own apartments. Meeting Villani by the way, he pressed the youth's hand affectionately. "You have saved Rome and me from great peril," said he; "the saints reward you!" Without tarrying for Villani's answer, he hurried on. Nina, anxious and perturbed, awaited him in their chamber.

"Not a-bed yet?" said he. "Fie, Nina! even thy beauty will not stand these vigils."

"I could not rest till I had seen thee. I hear—all Rome has heard it ere this—that thou hast seized Walter de Montreuil, and that he will perish by the headsman."

"The first robber that ever died so brave a death," returned Rienzi, slowly unrobing himself.

"Cola, I have never crossed your schemes, your policy, even by a suggestion. Enough for me to triumph in their success, to mourn for their failure. Now, I ask thee one request,—spare me the life of this man."

"Nina —"

"Hear me,—for thee I speak! Despite his crimes, his valor and his genius have gained him admirers, even amongst his foes. Many a prince, many a state that secretly rejoices at his fall, will affect horror against his judge. Hear me further: his brothers aided your return; the world will term

you ungrateful. His brothers lent you moneys, the world — out on it! — will term you — ”

“Hold!” interrupted the Senator. “All that thou sayest, my mind forestalled. But thou knowest me: to thee I have no disguise. No compact can bind Montreal’s faith, no mercy win his gratitude. Before his red right hand truth and justice are swept away. If I condemn Montreal, I incur disgrace and risk danger: granted. If I release him, ere the first showers of April the chargers of the Northmen will neigh in the halls of the Capitol. Which shall I hazard in this alternative, — myself, or Rome? Ask me no more; to bed, to bed!”

“Couldst thou read my forebodings, Cola, mystic, gloomy, unaccountable!”

“Forebodings! — I have mine,” answered Rienzi, sadly, gazing on space, as if his thoughts peopled it with spectres. Then, raising his eyes to heaven, he said, with that fanatical energy which made much both of his strength and weakness, “Lord, mine at least not the sin of Saul! The Amalekite shall not be saved!”

While Rienzi enjoyed a short, troubled, and restless sleep, over which Nina watched, — unslumbering, anxious, tearful, and oppressed with dark and terrible forewarnings, — the accuser was more happy than the judge. The last thoughts that floated before the young mind of Angelo Villani, ere wrapped in sleep, were bright and sanguine. He felt no honorable remorse that he had entrapped the confidence of another, — he felt only that his scheme had prospered, that his mission had been fulfilled. The grateful words of Rienzi rang in his ear, and hopes of fortune and power, beneath the sway of the Roman Senator, lulled him into slumber and colored all his dreams.

Scarce, however, had he been two hours asleep ere he was wakened by one of the attendants of the palace, himself half awake. “Pardon me, Messere Villani,” said he, “but there is a messenger below from the good Sister Ursula; he bids thee haste instantly to the convent, — she is sick unto death, and has tidings that crave thy immediate presence.”

Angelo, whose morbid susceptibility as to his parentage was

ever excited by vague but ambitious hopes, started up, dressed hurriedly, and joining the messenger below, repaired to the Convent. In the Court of the Capitol and by the Staircase of the Lion was already heard the noise of the workmen, and looking back, Villani beheld the scaffold, hung with black, sleeping cloudlike in the gray light of dawn; at the same time the bell of the Capitol tolled heavily. A pang shot athwart him. He hurried on; despite the immature earliness of the hour, he met groups of either sex hastening along the streets to witness the execution of the redoubted Captain of the Grand Company. The Convent of the Augustines was at the farthest extremity of that city, even then so extensive, and the red light upon the hill-tops already heralded the rising sun ere the young man reached the venerable porch. His name obtained him instant admittance.

"Heaven grant," said an old nun who conducted him through a long and winding passage, "that thou mayst bring comfort to the sick sister; she has pined for thee grievously since matins."

In a cell set apart for the reception of visitors (from the outward world) to such of the Sisterhood as received the necessary dispensation, sat the aged nun. Angelo had only seen her once since his return to Rome, and since then disease had made rapid havoc on her form and features. And now, in her shroudlike garments and attenuated frame, she seemed by the morning light as a spectre whom day had surprised above the earth. She approached the youth, however, with a motion more elastic and rapid than seemed possible to her worn and ghastly form. "Thou art come," she said. "Well, well! This morning, after matins, my confessor, an Augustine, who alone knows the secrets of my life, took me aside and told me that Walter de Montreal had been seized by the Senator, that he was adjudged to die, and that one of the Augustine brotherhood had been sent for to attend his last hours, — is it so?"

"Thou wert told aright," said Angelo, wonderingly. "The man at whose name thou wert wont to shudder, against whom thou hast so often warned me, will die at sunrise."

"So soon! so soon! Oh, Mother of Mercy, fly! Thou art

about the person of the Senator, thou hast high favor with him. Fly! down on thy knees, and as thou hopest for God's grace, rise not till thou hast won the Provençal's life."

"She raves," muttered Angelo, with white lips.

"I do *not* rave, boy!" screeched the Sister, wildly. "Know that my daughter was his leman. He disgraced our house, — a house haughtier than his own. Sinner that I was, I vowed revenge. His boy — they had only one! — was brought up in a robber's camp; a life of bloodshed, a death of doom, a futurity of hell, were before him. I plucked the child from such a fate, I bore him away, I told the father he was dead, I placed him in the path to honorable fortunes. May my sin be forgiven me! Angelo Villani, thou art that child; Walter de Montreal is thy father. But now, trembling on the verge of death, I shudder at the vindictive thoughts I once nourished. Perhaps —"

"Sinner and accursed!" interrupted Villani, with a loud shout, — "sinner and accursed thou art indeed! Know that it was *I* who betrayed thy daughter's lover! By the son's treason dies the father!"

Not a moment more did he tarry; he waited not to witness the effect his words produced. As one frantic, as one whom a fiend possesses or pursues, he rushed from the Convent, he flew through the desolate streets. The death-bell came, first indistinct, then loud, upon his ear; every sound seemed to him like the curse of God. On, on, — he passed the more deserted quarter; crowds swept before him; he was mingled with the living stream, delayed, pushed back; thousands on thousands around, before him. Breathless, gasping, he still pressed on; he forced his way — he heard not — he saw not — all was like a dream. Up burst the sun over the distant hills; the bell ceased! From right to left he pushed aside the crowd: his strength was as a giant's. He neared the fatal spot. A dead hush lay like a heavy air over the multitude. He heard a voice as he pressed along, deep and clear, — it was the voice of his father! It ceased, the audience breathed heavily; they murmured; they swayed to and fro. On, on went Angelo Villani. The guards of the Senator stopped his

way; he dashed aside their pikes, he eluded their grasp, he pierced the armed barrier, he stood on the Place of the Capitol. "Hold, hold!" he would have cried; but horror struck him dumb. He beheld the gleaming axe—he saw the bended neck. Ere another breath passed his lips, a ghastly and trunkless face was raised on high: Walter de Montreal was no more!

Villani saw, swooned not, shrank not, breathed not! But he turned his eyes from that lifted head, dropping gore, to the balcony in which, according to custom, sat, in solemn pomp, the Senator of Rome,—and the face of that young man was as the face of a demon!

"Ha!" said he, muttering to himself, and recalling the words of Rienzi seven years before, "*Blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge!*"



CHAPTER VI.

THE SUSPENSE.

WALTER DE MONTREAL was buried in the church of St. Maria dell' Araceli. But the evil that he did lived after him! Although the vulgar had, until his apprehension, murmured against Rienzi for allowing so notorious a freebooter to be at large, he was scarcely dead ere they compassionated the object of their terror. With that singular species of piety which Montreal had always cultivated, as if a decorous and natural part of the character of a warrior, no sooner was his sentence fixed than he had surrendered himself to the devout preparation for death. With the Augustine Friar he consumed the brief remainder of the night in prayer and confession, comforted his brothers, and passed to the scaffold with the step of a hero and the self-acquittal of a martyr. In the wonderful delusions of the human heart, far from feeling remorse at a life of professional rapine and slaughter, almost the last

words of the brave warrior were in proud commendation of his own deeds. "Be valiant like me," he said to his brothers, "and remember that ye are now the heirs to the Humbler of Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca."¹

This confidence in himself continued at the scaffold. "I die," he said, addressing the Romans, "I die contented, since my bones shall rest in the Holy City of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and the Soldier of Christ shall have the burial-place of the Apostles. But I die unjustly. My wealth is my crime, the poverty of your state my accuser. Senator of Rome, thou mayst envy my last hour: men like Walter de Montreal perish not unavenged." So saying, he turned to the east, murmured a brief prayer, knelt down deliberately, and said as to himself, "Rome guard my ashes! Earth my memory! Fate my revenge! And now Heaven receive my soul! Strike!" At the first blow the head was severed from the body.

His treason but imperfectly known, the fear of him forgotten, all that remained of the recollection of Walter de Montreal² in Rome was admiration for his heroism and compassion for his end. The fate of Pandulfo di Guido, which followed some days afterwards, excited a yet deeper, though more quiet, sentiment against the Senator. "He was once Rienzi's friend!" said one man; "He was an honest, upright citizen!" muttered another; "He was an advocate of the people!" growled Cecco del Vecchio. But the Senator had wound himself up to a resolve to be inflexibly just, and to regard every peril to Rome as became a Roman. Rienzi remembered that

¹ Pregovi che vi amiate e siate valorosi al mondo, come fui io, che mi feci fare obbedienza a la Puglia, Toscana, e a La Marca. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 22.

I pray you love one another, and be valorous as was I, who made Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca own obedience to me. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

² The military renown and bold exploits of Montreal are acknowledged by all the Italian authorities. One of them declares that since the time of Cæsar, Italy had never known so great a captain. The biographer of Rienzi, forgetting all the offences of the splendid and knightly robber, seems to feel only commiseration for his fate. He informs us, moreover, that at Tivoli one of his servants (perhaps our friend Rodolf of Saxony), hearing his death, died of grief the following day.

he had never confided but he had been betrayed; he had never forgiven but to sharpen enmity. He was amidst a ferocious people, uncertain friends, wily enemies; and misplaced mercy would be but a premium to conspiracy. Yet the struggle he underwent was visible in the hysterical emotions he betrayed. He now wept bitterly, now laughed wildly. "Can I never again have the luxury to forgive?" said he. The coarse spectators of that passion deemed it, — some imbecility, some hypocrisy. But the execution produced the momentary effect intended. All sedition ceased, terror crept throughout the city, order and peace rose to the surface; but beneath, in the strong expression of a contemporaneous writer, "Lo mor-morito quietamente suonava."¹

On examining dispassionately the conduct of Rienzi at this awful period of his life, it is scarcely possible to condemn it of a single error in point of policy. Cured of his faults, he exhibited no unnecessary ostentation, he indulged in no exhibitions of intoxicated pride; that gorgeous imagination rather than vanity, which had led the Tribune into spectacle and pomp, was now lulled to rest by the sober memory of grave vicissitudes and the stern calmness of a maturer intellect. Frugal, provident, watchful, self-collected, "never was seen," observes no partial witness, "so extraordinary a man."² "In him was concentrated every thought for every want of Rome." Indefatigably occupied, he inspected, ordained, regulated all things, in the city, in the army, for peace or for war. But he was feebly supported, and those he employed were lukewarm and lethargic. Still his arms prospered. Place after place, fortress after fortress, yielded to the Lieutenant of the Senator: and the cession of Palestrina itself was hourly expected. His art and address were always strikingly exhibited in difficult situations, and the reader cannot fail to have noticed how conspicuously they were displayed in delivering himself from the iron tutelage of his foreign mercenaries. Montreal executed, his brothers imprisoned (though their lives were spared), a fear that induced respect was stricken into the breasts of

¹ "The murmur quietly sounded."

² *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 23.

those bandit soldiers. Removed from Rome, and under Annibaldi, engaged against the Barons, constant action and constant success withheld those necessary fiends from falling on their master; while Rienzi, willing to yield to the natural antipathy of the Romans, thus kept the Northmen from all contact with the city, and, as he boasted, was the only chief in Italy who reigned in his palace guarded only by his citizens.

Despite his perilous situation, despite his suspicions and his fears, no wanton cruelty stained his stern justice; Montreal and Pandulfo di Guido were the only state victims he demanded. If, according to the dark Machiavelism of Italian wisdom, the death of those enemies was impolitic, it was not in the act, but the mode of doing it. A prince of Bologna or of Milan would have avoided the sympathy excited by the scaffold, and the drug or the dagger would have been the safer substitute for the axe. But with all his faults, real and imputed, no single act of that foul and murderous policy, which made the science of the more fortunate princes of Italy, ever advanced the ambition or promoted the security of the Last of the Roman Tribunes. Whatever his errors, he lived and died as became a man who dreamed the vain but glorious dream that in a corrupt and dastard populace he could revive the genius of the old Republic.

Of all who attended on the Senator, the most assiduous and the most honored was still Angelo Villani. Promoted to a high civil station, Rienzi felt it as a return of youth to find one person entitled to his gratitude; he loved and confided in the youth as a son. Villani was never absent from his side, except in intercourse with the various popular leaders in the various quarters of the city; and in this intercourse his zeal was indefatigable, — it seemed even to prey upon his health; and Rienzi chid him fondly whenever, starting from his own reveries, he beheld the abstracted eye and the livid paleness which had succeeded the sparkle and bloom of youth.

Such chiding the young man answered only by the same unvarying words, —

“Senator, I have a great trust to fulfil;” and at these words he smiled.

One day Villani, while with the Senator, said rather abruptly, "Do you remember, my lord, that before Viterbo I acquitted myself so in arms that even the Cardinal d'Albornoz was pleased to notice me?"

"I remember your valor well, Angelo; but why the question?"

"My lord, Bellini, the Captain of the Guard of the Capitol, is dangerously ill."

"I know it."

"Whom can my lord trust at the post?"

"Why, the lieutenant."

"What! — a soldier that has served under the Orsini?"

"True. Well! there is Tommaso Filangieri."

"An excellent man; but is he not kin by blood to Pandolfo di Guido?"

"Ay, is he so? It must be thought of. Hast *thou* any friend to name?" said the Senator, smiling. "Methinks thy cavils point that way."

"My lord," replied Villani, coloring, "I am too young, perhaps; but the post is one that demands fidelity more than it does years. Shall I own it? My tastes are rather to serve thee with my sword than with my pen."

"Wilt thou indeed accept the office? It is of less dignity and emolument than the one you hold; and you are full young to lead these stubborn spirits."

"Senator, I led taller men than they are to the assault at Viterbo. But, be it as seems best to your superior wisdom. Whatever you do, I pray you to be cautious. If you select a traitor to the command of the Capitol Guard — I tremble at the thought!"

"By my faith, thou dost turn pale at it, dear boy; thy affection is a sweet drop in a bitter draught. Whom can I choose better than thee? Thou shalt have the post, at least during Bellini's illness. I will attend to it to-day. The business, too, will less fatigue thy young mind than that which now employs thee. Thou art over-labored in our cause."

"Senator, I can but repeat my usual answer, — I have a great trust to fulfil!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TAX.

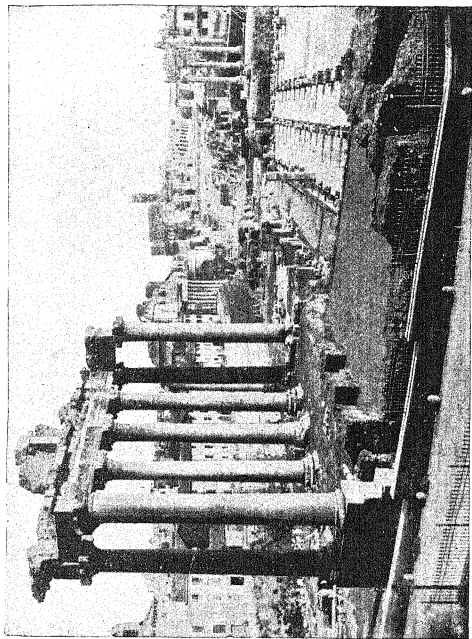
THESE formidable conspiracies quelled, the Barons nearly subdued, and three parts of the Papal territory reunited to Rome, Rienzi now deemed he might safely execute one of his favorite projects for the preservation of the liberties of his native city; and this was to raise and organize in each quarter of Rome a Roman Legion. Armed in the defence of their own institutions, he thus trusted to establish amongst her own citizens the only soldiery requisite for Rome.

But so base were the tools with which this great man was condemned to work out his noble schemes that none could be found to serve their own country without a pay equal to that demanded by foreign hirelings. With the insolence so peculiar to a race that has once been great, each Roman said, "Am I not better than a German? Pay me, then, accordingly."

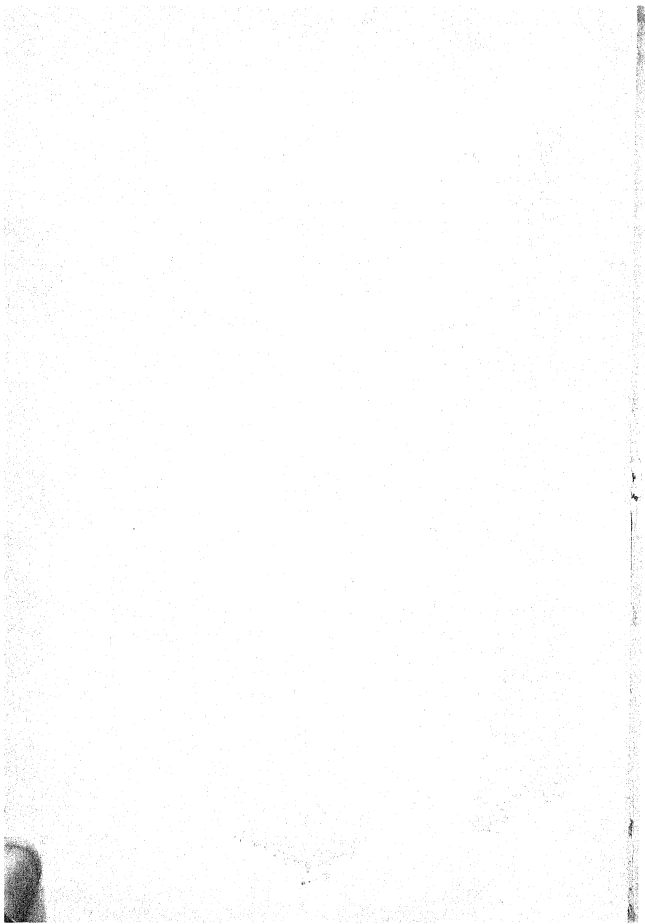
The Senator smothered his disgust: he had learned at last to know that the age of the Catos was no more. From a daring enthusiast, experience had converted him into a practical statesman. The Legions were necessary to Rome; they were formed,—gallant their appearance and faultless their caparisons. How were they to be paid? There was but one means to maintain Rome,—Rome must be taxed. A gabelle was put upon wine and salt.

The proclamation ran thus:—

"Romans! raised to the rank of your Senator, my whole thought has been for your liberties and welfare; already Treason defeated in the City, our banners triumphant without, attest the favor with which the Deity regards men who seek to unite liberty with law. Let us set an example to Italy and the World! Let us prove that the Roman sword can guard the Roman Forum! In each Rione of the City is provided a Legion of the Citizens, collected from the traders and artisans



THE ROMAN FORUM.



of the town; they allege that they cannot leave their callings without remuneration. Your Senator calls upon you willingly to assist in your own defence. He has given you liberty; he has restored to you peace: your oppressors are scattered over the earth. He asks you now to preserve the treasures you have gained. To be free, you must sacrifice something; for freedom, what sacrifice too great? Confident of your support, I at length, for the first time, exert the right intrusted to me by office, and for Rome's salvation I tax the Romans!"

Then followed the announcement of the gabelle.

The proclamation was set up in the public thoroughfares. Round one of the placards a crowd assembled. Their gestures were vehement and unguarded; their eyes sparkled; they conversed low, but eagerly.

"He dares to tax us, then! Why, the Barons or the Pope could not do more than that!"

"Shame! shame!" cried a gaunt female; "we who were his friends! How are our little ones to get bread?"

"He should have seized the Pope's money!" quoth an honest wine-vender.

"Ah! Pandulfo di Guido would have maintained an army at his own cost. He was a rich man. What insolence in the innkeeper's son to be a Senator!"

"We are not Romans if we suffer this!" said a deserter from Palestrina.

"Fellow-citizens," exclaimed gruffly a tall man who had hitherto been making a clerk read to him the particulars of the tax imposed, and whose heavy brain at length understood that wine was to be made dearer, — "fellow-citizens, we must have a new revolution! This is indeed gratitude! What have we benefited by restoring this man? Are we always to be ground to the dust? To pay — pay — pay! Is that all we are fit for?"

"Hark to Cecco del Vecchio!"

"No, no; not now," growled the smith. "To-night the artificers have a special meeting. We'll see; we'll see!"

A young man muffled in a cloak, who had not been before observed, touched the smith.

"Whoever storms the Capitol the day after to-morrow at the dawn," he whispered, "shall find the guards absent!"

He was gone before the smith could look round.

The same night Rienzi, retiring to rest, said to Angelo Villani: "A bold but necessary measure this of mine! How do the people take it?"

"They murmur a little, but seem to recognize the necessity. Cecco del Vecchio *was* the loudest grumbler, but is now the loudest approver."

"The man is rough, he once deserted me; but then, that fatal excommunication! He and the Romans learned a bitter lesson in that desertion, and experience has, I trust, taught them to be honest. Well, if this tax be raised quietly, in two years Rome will be again the Queen of Italy, her army manned, her Republic formed; and then — then —"

"Then what, Senator?"

"Why then, my Angelo, Cola di Rienzi may die in peace! There is a want which a profound experience of power and pomp brings at last to us, — a want gnawing as that of hunger, wearing as that of sleep! *My Angelo, it is the want to die!*"

"My lord, I would give this right hand," cried Villani, earnestly, "to hear you say you were attached to life!"

"You are a good youth, Angelo!" said Rienzi, as he passed to Nina's chamber; and in her smile and wistful tenderness forgot for awhile — that he was a great man!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE EVENT.

THE next morning the Senator of Rome held high court in the Capitol. From Florence, from Padua, from Pisa, even from Milan (the dominion of the Visconti), from Genoa, from Naples, came ambassadors to welcome his return or to thank him

for having freed Italy from the freebooter De Montreal. Venice alone, who held in her pay the Grand Company, stood aloof. Never had Rienzi seemed more prosperous and more powerful, and never had he exhibited a more easy and cheerful majesty of demeanor.

Scarce was the audience over when a messenger arrived from Palestrina. The town had surrendered, the Colonna had departed, and the standard of the Senator waved from the walls of the last hold of the rebellious Barons. Rome might now at length consider herself free, and not a foe seemed left to menace the repose of Rienzi.

The Court dissolved. The Senator, elated and joyous, repaired towards his private apartments, previous to the banquet given to the ambassadors. Villani met him with his wonted sombre aspect.

"No sadness to-day, my Angelo," said the Senator, gayly; "Palestrina is ours!"

"I am glad to hear such news, and to see my lord of so fair a mien," answered Angelo. "Does he not now desire life?"

"Till Roman virtue revives, perhaps, — yes! But thus are we fools of fortune, — to-day glad; to-morrow dejected!"

"To-morrow," repeated Villani, mechanically: "ay, — to-morrow perhaps dejected."

"Thou playest with my words, boy," said Rienzi, half angrily, as he turned away.

But Villani heeded not the displeasure of his lord.

The banquet was thronged and brilliant; and Rienzi that day, without an effort, played the courteous host.

Milanese, Paduan, Pisan, Neapolitan, vied with each other in attracting the smiles of the potent Senator. Prodigal were their compliments, lavish their promises of support. No monarch in Italy seemed more securely throned.

The banquet was over (as usual on state occasions) at an early hour, and Rienzi, somewhat heated with wine, strolled forth alone from the Capitol. Bending his solitary steps towards the Palatine, he saw the pale and veil-like mists that succeed the sunset gather over the wild grass which waves above the Palace of the Cæsars. On a mound of ruins (column

and arch overthrown) he stood, with folded arms, musing and intent. In the distance lay the melancholy tombs of the Campagna, and the circling hills, crested with the purple hues soon to melt beneath the starlight. Not a breeze stirred the dark cypress and unwavering pine. There was something awful in the stillness of the skies, hushing the desolate grandeur of the earth below. Many and mingled were the thoughts that swept over Rienzi's breast; memory was busy at his heart. How often, in his youth, had he trodden the same spot! what visions had he nursed! what hopes conceived! In the turbulence of his later life, Memory had long slept; but at that hour she re-asserted her shadowy reign with a despotism that seemed prophetic. He was wandering, a boy, with his young brother, hand in hand, by the river-side at eve; anon he saw a pale face and a gory side, and once more uttered his imprecations of revenge! His first successes, his virgin triumphs, his secret love, his fame, his power, his reverses, the hermitage of Maiella, the dungeon of Avignon, the triumphal return to Rome,—all swept across his breast with a distinctness as if he were living those scenes again! And *now!*—he shrank from the *present*, and descended the hill. The moon, already risen, shed her light over the Forum as he passed through its mingled ruins. By the Temple of Jupiter two figures suddenly emerged; the moonlight fell upon their faces, and Rienzi recognized Cecco del Vecchio and Angelo Villani. They saw him not; but, eagerly conversing, disappeared by the Arch of Trajan.

"Villani, ever active in my service!" thought the Senator; "methinks this morning I spoke to him harshly,—it was churlish in me!"

He re-entered the place of the Capitol; he stood by the staircase of the Lion: there was a red stain upon the pavement, unobliterated since Montreal's execution, and the Senator drew himself aside with an inward shudder. Was it the ghastly and spectral light of the moon, or did the face of that old Egyptian monster wear an aspect that was as of life? The stony eyeballs seemed bent upon him with a malignant scowl; and as he passed on, and looked behind, they appeared almost

preternaturally to follow his steps. A chill, he knew not why, sank into his heart. He hastened to regain his palace. The sentinels made way for him.

"Senator," said one of them, doubtfully, "Messere Angelo Villani is our new captain, — we are to obey his orders?"

"Assuredly," returned the Senator, passing on. The man lingered uneasily, as if he would have spoken; but Rienzi observed it not. Seeking his chamber, he found Nina and Irene waiting for him. His heart yearned to his wife. Care and toil had of late driven her from his thoughts, and he felt it remorsefully, as he gazed upon her noble face, softened by the solicitude of untiring and anxious love.

"Sweetest," said he, winding his arms around her tenderly, "thy lips never chide me, but thine eyes sometimes do! We have been apart too long. Brighter days dawn upon us, when I shall have leisure to thank thee for all thy care. And you, my fair sister, you smile on me! Ah! you have heard that your lover, ere this, is released by the cession of Palestrina, and to-morrow's sun will see him at your feet. Despite all the cares of the day, I remembered thee, my Irene, and sent a messenger to bring back the blush to that pale cheek. Come, come, we shall be happy again!" And with that domestic fondness common to him when harsher thoughts permitted, he sat himself beside the two persons dearest to his hearth and heart.

"So happy! If we could have many hours like this!" murmured Nina, sinking on his breast. "Yet sometimes I wish —"

"And I too," interrupted Rienzi; "for I read thy woman's thought, — *I* too sometimes wish that fate had placed us in the lowlier valleys of life! But it may come yet! Irene wedded to Adrian, Rome married to liberty, — and then, Nina, methinks you and I would find some quiet hermitage, and talk over old gauds and triumphs, as of a summer's dream. Beautiful, kiss me! Couldst thou resign these pomps?"

"For a desert with *thee*, Cola!"

"Let me reflect," resumed Rienzi: "is not to-day the seventh

of October? Yes. On the seventh, be it noted, my foes yielded to my power! Seven,—my fated number, whether ominous of good or evil! Seven months did I reign as Tribune; seven¹ years was I absent as an exile; to-morrow, that sees me without an enemy, completes my seventh week of return!”

“And seven was the number of the crowns the Roman Convents and the Roman Council awarded thee, after the ceremony which gave thee the knighthood of the *Santo Spirito*!”² said Nina, adding, with woman’s tender wit, “the brightest association of all!”

“Follies seem these thoughts to others, and to philosophy, in truth, they are so,” said Rienzi; “but all my life long, omen and type and shadow have linked themselves to action and event: and the atmosphere of other men hath not been mine. Life itself a riddle, why should riddles amaze us? *The future!*—what mystery in the very word! Had we lived all *through* the Past, since Time was, our profoundest experience of a thousand ages could not give us a guess of the events that wait the very moment we are about to enter! Thus deserted by Reason, what wonder that we recur to the Imagination, on which, by dream and symbol, God sometimes paints the likeness of things to come? Who can endure to leave the Future all unguessed, and sit tamely down to groan under the fardel of the Present? No, no! that which the foolish-wise call Fanaticism belongs to the same part of us as Hope. Each but carries us onward,—from a barren strand to a glorious, if unbounded sea. Each is the yearning for the GREAT BEYOND, which attests our immortality. Each has its visions and

¹ There was the lapse of one year between the release of Rienzi from Avignon and his triumphal return to Rome,—a year chiefly spent in the campaign of Alborno.

² This superstition had an excuse in strange historical coincidences; and the number seven was indeed to Rienzi what the 3d of September was to Cromwell. The ceremony of the seven crowns which he received after his knighthood, on the nature of which ridiculous ignorance has been shown by many recent writers, was, in fact, principally a religious and typical donation (symbolical of the gifts of the Holy Spirit), conferred by the heads of convents; and that part of the ceremony which was political, was republican, not regal.

chimeras, — some false, but *some* true! Verily, a man who becomes great is often but made so by a kind of sorcery in his own soul, — a Pythia which prophesies that he *shall* be great; and so renders the life one effort to fulfil the warning! Is this folly? It were so, if all things stopped at the grave! But perhaps the very sharpening and exercising and elevating the faculties here, though but for a bootless end *on* earth, may be designed to fit the soul, thus quickened and ennobled, to some high destiny *beyond* the earth! Who can tell? Not I! Let us pray."

While the Senator was thus employed, Rome in her various quarters presented less holy and quiet scenes.

In the fortress of the Orsini, lights flitted to and fro through the gratings of the great court. Angelo Villani might be seen stealing from the postern-gate. Another hour, and the moon was high in heaven; towards the ruins of the Colosseum men, whose dress bespoke them of the lowest rank, were seen creeping from the lanes and alleys, two by two; from these ruins glided again the form of the son of Montreal. Later yet: the moon is sinking, a gray light breaking in the east, and the gates of Rome, by St. John of Lateran, are open! Villani is conversing with the sentries! The moon has set; the mountains are dim with a mournful and chilling haze; Villani is before the palace of the Capitol, — the *only* soldier there! Where are the Roman legions that were to guard alike the freedom and the deliverer of Rome?

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CLOSE OF THE CHASE.

It was the morning of the 8th of October, 1354. Rienzi, who rose betimes, stirred restlessly in his bed. "It is yet early," he said to Nina, whose soft arm was round his neck; "none of my people seem to be astir. Howbeit, *my* day begins before *theirs*."

"Rest yet, my Cola: you want sleep."

"No; I feel feverish, and this old pain in the side torments me. I have letters to write."

"Let me be your secretary, dearest," said Nina.

Rienzi smiled affectionately as he rose; he repaired to his closet adjoining his sleeping apartment, and used the bath, as was his wont. Then dressing himself, he returned to Nina, who, already loosely robed, sat by the writing-table, ready for her office of love.

"How still are all things!" said Rienzi. "What a cool and delicious prelude, in these early hours, to the toilsome day!"

Leaning over his wife, he then dictated different letters, interrupting the task at times by such observations as crossed his mind.

"So, now to Annibaldi! By the way, young Adrian should join us to-day. How I rejoice for Irene's sake!"

"Dear sister, yes! She loves — if any, Cola, can so love — as we do."

"Well, but to your task, my fair scribe. Ha! what noise is that? I hear an armed step, — the stairs creak; some one shouts my name."

Rienzi flew to his sword; the door was thrown rudely open, and a figure in complete armor appeared within the chamber.

"How! what means this?" said Rienzi, standing before Nina, with his drawn sword.

The intruder lifted his visor, — it was Adrian Colonna.

"Fly, Rienzi! Hasten, Signora! Thank Heaven, I can save ye yet! Myself and train released by the capture of Palestrina, the pain of my wound detained me last night at Tivoli. The town was filled with armed men, — not *thine*, Senator. I heard rumors that alarmed me. I resolved to proceed onward; I reached Rome, the gates of the city are wide open!"

"How!"

"Your guard gone. Presently I came upon a band of the retainers of the Savelli. My insignia as a Colonna misled

them. I learned that this very hour some of your enemies are within the city; the rest are on their march,—the people themselves arm against you. In the obscurer streets I passed through, the mob were already forming. They took me for thy foe and shouted. I came hither,—thy sentries have vanished. The private door below is unbarred and open. Not a soul seems left in thy palace. Haste, fly, save thyself! Where is Irene?"

"The Capitol deserted,—impossible!" cried Rienzi. He strode across the chambers to the ante-room, where his night-guard usually waited,—it was empty! He passed hastily to Villani's room,—it was untenanted! He would have passed farther, but the doors were secured without. It was evident that all egress had been cut off, save by the private door below, and *that* had been left open to admit his murderers!

He returned to his room: Nina had already gone to rouse and prepare Irene, whose chamber was on the other side, within one of their own.

"Quick, Senator!" said Adrian. "Methinks there is yet time. We must make across to the Tiber. I have stationed my faithful squires and Northmen there. A boat waits us."

"Hark!" interrupted Rienzi, whose senses had of late been preternaturally quickened. "I hear a distant shout, a familiar shout, 'Viva 'l Popolo!' Why, so say I! These must be friends."

"Deceive not thyself; thou hast scarce a friend at Rome."

"Hist!" said Rienzi, in a whisper: "save Nina, save Irene. I cannot accompany thee."

"Art thou mad?"

"No, but fearless. Besides, did I accompany, I might but destroy you all. Were I found with you, you would be massacred with me. Without me ye are safe. Yes, even the Senator's wife and sister have provoked no revenge. Save them, noble Colonna! Cola di Rienzi puts his trust in God alone!"

By this time Nina had returned, Irene with her. Afar was heard the tramp,—steady, slow, gathering, of the fatal multitude.

"Now, Cola," said Nina, with a bold and cheerful air, and she took her husband's arm, while Adrian had already found his charge in Irene.

"Yes, *now*, Nina," said Rienzi; "at length we part! If this is my last hour, *in* my last hour I pray God to bless and shield thee! For verily, thou hast been my exceeding solace,—provident as a parent, tender as a child, the smile of my hearth, the—the—"

Rienzi was almost unmanned. Emotions deep, conflicting, unspeakably fond and grateful, literally choked his speech.

"What!" cried Nina, clinging to his breast and parting her hair from her eyes as she sought his averted face. "Part?—never! This is my place,—all Rome shall not tear me from it!"

Adrian, in despair, seized her hand and attempted to drag her thence.

"Touch me not, sir!" said Nina, waving her arm with angry majesty, while her eyes sparkled as a lioness whom the huntsmen would sever from her young. "I am the wife of Cola di Rienzi, the Great Senator of Rome, and by his side will I live and die!"

"Take her hence; quick, quick! I hear the crowd advancing."

Irene tore herself from Adrian and fell at the feet of Rienzi; she clasped his knees.

"Come, my brother, come! Why lose these precious moments? Rome forbids you to cast away a life in which her very self is bound up."

"Right, Irene; Rome is bound up with me, and we will rise or fall together. No more!"

"You destroy us all!" said Adrian, with generous and impatient warmth. "A few minutes more, and we are lost. Rash man! it is not to fall by an infuriate mob that you have been preserved from so many dangers."

"I believe it," said the Senator, as his tall form seemed to dilate as with the greatness of his own soul. "I shall triumph yet! Never shall mine enemies, never shall posterity, say that a *second* time Rienzi abandoned Rome! Hark! 'Viva 'l

Popolo!’ Still the cry of ‘THE PEOPLE.’ That cry scares none but tyrants! I shall triumph and survive!”

“And I with thee!” said Nina, firmly. Rienzi paused a moment, gazed on his wife, passionately clasped her to his heart, kissed her again and again, and then said, “Nina, I command thee, — Go!”

“Never!”

He paused. Irene’s face, drowned in tears, met his eyes.

“We will all perish with you,” said his sister; “you only, Adrian, *you* leave us!”

“Be it so,” said the Knight, sadly, “we will *all* remain;” and he desisted at once from further effort.

There was a dead but short pause, broken but by a convulsive sob from Irene. The tramp of the raging thousands sounded fearfully distinct. Rienzi seemed lost in thought; then, lifting his head, he said calmly, “Ye have triumphed, — I join ye; I but collect these papers, and follow you. Quick, Adrian, — save them!” and he pointed meaningly to Nina.

Waiting no other hint, the young Colonna seized Nina in his strong grasp; with his left hand he supported Irene, who with terror and excitement was almost insensible. Rienzi relieved him of the lighter load; he took his sister in his arms, and descended the winding stairs. Nina remained passive: she heard her husband’s step behind, — it was enough for her; she but turned once to thank him with her eyes. A tall Northman, clad in armor, stood at the open door. Rienzi placed Irene, now perfectly lifeless, in the soldier’s arms, and kissed her pale cheek in silence.

“Quick, my lord,” said the Northman, “on all sides they come!” So saying, he bounded down the descent with his burden. Adrian followed with Nina; the Senator paused one moment, turned back, and was in his room ere Adrian was aware that he had vanished.

Hastily he drew the coverlet from his bed, fastened it to the casement bars, and by its aid dropped (at a distance several feet) into the balcony below. “I will not die like a rat,” said he, “in the trap they have set for me! The whole crowd shall at least see and hear me.”

This was the work of a moment.

Meanwhile, Nina had scarcely proceeded six paces before she discovered that she was alone with Adrian.

"Ha! Cola!" she cried: "where is he? He has gone!"

"Take heart, lady; he has returned but for some secret papers he has forgotten. He will follow us anon."

"Let us wait, then."

"Lady," said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "hear you not the crowd? On, on!" and he flew with a swifter step. Nina struggled in his grasp; Love gave her the strength of despair. With a wild laugh she broke from him. She flew back: the door was closed, but unbarred; her trembling hands lingered a moment round the spring. She opened it, drew the heavy bolt across the panels, and frustrated all attempt from Adrian to regain her. She was on the stairs, — she was in the room. Rienzi was gone! She fled, shrieking his name, through the State Chambers, — all was desolate. She found the doors opening on the various passages that admitted to the rooms below barred without. Breathless and gasping, she returned to the chamber. She hurried to the casement: she perceived the method by which he had descended below, — her brave heart told her of his brave design; she saw they were separated. "But the same roof holds us," she cried joyously, "and our fate shall be the same!" With that thought she sank in mute patience on the floor.

Forming the generous resolve not to abandon the faithful and devoted pair without another effort, Adrian had followed Nina; but too late, — the door was closed against his efforts. The crowd marched on: he heard their cry change on a sudden, — it was no longer, "LIVE THE PEOPLE!" but, "DEATH TO THE TRAITOR!" His attendant had already disappeared; and waking now only to the danger of Irene, the Colonna in bitter grief turned away, lightly sped down the descent, and hastened to the river-side, where the boat and his band awaited him.

The balcony on which Rienzi had alighted was that from which he had been accustomed to address the people; it communicated with a vast hall used on solemn occasions for State festivals, and on either side were square projecting towers,

whose grated casements looked into the balcony. One of these towers was devoted to the armory, the other contained the prison of Brettone, the brother of Montreal. Beyond the latter tower was the general prison of the Capitol; for then the prison and the palace were in awful neighborhood!

The windows of the hall were yet open, and Rienzi passed into it from the balcony. The witness of the yesterday's banquet was still there, — the wine, yet undried, crimsoned the floor, and goblets of gold and silver shone from the recesses. He proceeded at once to the armory, and selected from the various suits that which he himself had worn when, nearly eight years ago, he had chased the Barons from the gates of Rome. He arrayed himself in the mail, leaving only his head uncovered; and then taking, in his right hand, from the wall, the great Gonfalon of Rome, returned once more to the hall. Not a man encountered him. In that vast building, save the prisoners and the faithful Nina, whose presence he knew not of, the Senator was alone.

On they came, no longer in measured order, as stream after stream, — from lane, from alley, from palace and from hovel, — the raging sea received new additions. On they came, their passions excited by their numbers, — women and men, children and malignant age, — in all the awful array of aroused, released, unresisted physical strength and brutal wrath: "Death to the traitor — death to the tyrant — death to him who has taxed the people!" "*Mora! l' traditore che ha fatta la gabella! Mora!*" Such was the cry of the people, — such the crime of the Senator! They broke over the low palisades of the Capitol; they filled with one sudden rush the vast space, — a moment before so desolate, — now swarming with human beings athirst for blood!

Suddenly came a dead silence, and on the balcony above stood Rienzi; his head was bared, and the morning sun shone over the lordly brow and the hair grown gray before its time in the service of that maddening multitude. Pale and erect he stood, neither fear, nor anger, nor menace, but deep grief and high resolve, upon his features! A momentary shame, a momentary awe seized the crowd.

He pointed to the Gonfalon, wrought with the Republican motto and arms of Rome, and thus he began, —

“I too am a Roman and a Citizen! hear me!”

“Hear him not! hear him not! his false tongue can charm away our senses!” cried a voice louder than his own; and Rienzi recognized Cecco del Vecchio.

“Hear him not! down with the tyrant!” cried a more shrill and youthful tone; and by the side of the artisan stood Angelo Villani.

“Hear him not! death to the death-giver!” cried a voice close at hand; and from the grating of the neighboring prison glared near upon him, as the eye of a tiger, the vengeful gaze of the brother of Montreal.

Then from Earth to Heaven rose the roar: “Down with the tyrant! down with him who taxed the people!”

A shower of stones rattled on the mail of the Senator: still he stirred not; no changing muscle betokened fear. His persuasion of his own wonderful powers of eloquence, if he could but be heard, inspired him yet with hope; he stood collected in his own indignant, but determined thoughts. But the knowledge of that very eloquence was now his deadliest foe. The leaders of the multitude trembled lest he *should* be heard; “*and doubtless,*” says the contemporaneous biographer, “*had he but spoken, he would have changed them all, and the work been marred.*”

The soldiers of the Barons had already mixed themselves with the throng; more deadly weapons than stones aided the wrath of the multitude, — darts and arrows darkened the air; and now a voice was heard shrieking, “Way for the torches!” And red in the sunlight the torches tossed and waved, and danced to and fro, above the heads of the crowd, as if the fiends were let loose amongst the mob! And what place in hell *hath* fiends like those a mad mob can furnish? Straw and wood and litter were piled hastily round the great doors of the Capitol, and the smoke curled suddenly up, beating back the rush of the assailants.

Rienzi was no longer visible; an arrow had pierced his hand, — the right hand that supported the flag of Rome, the right

hand that had given a constitution to the Republic. He retired from the storm into the desolate hall.

He sat down; and tears, springing from no weak and woman source, but tears from the loftiest fountain of emotion, — tears that befit a warrior when his own troops desert him, a patriot when his countrymen rush to their own doom, a father when his children rebel against his love: tears such as these forced themselves from his eyes and relieved, but *they changed* his heart!

“Enough, enough!” he said, presently rising, and dashing the drops scornfully away; “I have risked, dared, toiled enough for this dastard and degenerate race. I will yet baffle their malice. I renounce the thought of which they are so little worthy! Let Rome perish! I feel, at last, that I am nobler than my country! She deserves not so high a sacrifice!”

With that feeling, Death lost all the nobleness of aspect it had before presented to him; and he resolved, in very scorn of his ungrateful foes, in very defeat of their inhuman wrath, to make one effort for his life! He divested himself of his glittering arms; his address, his dexterity, his craft, returned to him. His active mind ran over the chances of disguise, of escape; he left the hall, passed through the humbler rooms devoted to the servitors and menials, found in one of them a coarse working garb, endued himself with it, placed upon his head some of the draperies and furniture of the palace, as if escaping with them, and said, with his old *fantastico riso*:¹ “When all other friends desert me, I may well forsake myself!” With that he awaited his occasion.

Meanwhile the flames burned fierce and fast; the outer door below was already consumed; from the apartment he had deserted, the fire burst out in volleys of smoke, the wood crackled, the lead melted, with a crash fell the severed gate, — the dreadful entrance was opened to all the multitude; the proud Capitol of the Cæsars was already tottering to its fall! Now was the time! He passed the flaming door, the smouldering threshold; he passed the outer gates unscathed, — he was in

¹ Fantastic smile or laugh.

the middle of the crowd. "Plenty of pillage within," he said to the bystanders in the Roman *patois*, his face concealed by his load; "*Suso, suso a gliu traditore!*"¹ The mob rushed past him,—he went on; he gained the last stair descending into the open streets; he was at the last gate: liberty and life were before him.

A soldier (one of his own) seized him. "Pass not! Whither goest thou?"

"Beware lest the Senator escape disguised!" cried a voice behind,—it was Villani's. The concealing load was torn from his head: Rienzi stood revealed!

"I *am* the Senator!" he said in a loud voice. "Who dare touch the Representative of the People?"

The multitude were round him in an instant. Not led, but rather hurried and whirled along, the Senator was borne to the Place of the Lion. With the intense glare of the bursting flames, the gray image reflected a lurid light, and glowed—that grim and solemn monument!—as if itself of fire!

There arrived, the crowd gave way, terrified by the greatness of their victim. Silent he stood, and turned his face around: nor could the squalor of his garb, nor the terror of the hour, nor the proud grief of detection, abate the majesty of his mien or reassure the courage of the thousands who gathered, gazing, round him. The whole Capitol, wrapped in fire, lighted with ghastly pomp the immense multitude. Down the long vista of the streets extended the fiery light and the serried throng, till the crowd closed with the gleaming standards of the Colonna, the Orsini, the Savelli! Her true tyrants were marching into Rome! As the sound of their approaching horns and trumpets broke upon the burning air, the mob seemed to regain their courage. Rienzi prepared to speak; his first word was as the signal of his own death.

"Die, tyrant!" cried Cecco del Vecchio; and he plunged his dagger into the Senator's breast.

"Die, executioner of Montreal!" muttered Villani: "thus the trust is fulfilled!" and his was the second stroke. Then

¹ "Down, down with the traitor!"

as he drew back, and saw the artisan, in all the drunken fury of his brute passion, tossing up his cap, shouting aloud, and spurning the fallen lion, — the young man gazed upon him with a look of withering and bitter scorn, and said, while he sheathed his blade and slowly turned to quit the crowd, —

“Fool, miserable fool! *thou* and *these* at least had no *blood of kindred to avenge!*”

They heeded not his words, they saw him not depart; for as Rienzi, without a word, without a groan, fell to the earth, — as the roaring waves of the multitude closed over him, — a voice, shrill, sharp, and wild was heard above all the clamor. At the casement of the Palace (the casement of her bridal chamber), Nina stood! — through the flames that burst below and around, her face and outstretched arms alone visible! Ere yet the sound of that thrilling cry passed from the air, down with a mighty crash thundered that whole wing of the Capitol, — a blackened and smouldering mass.

At that hour a solitary boat was gliding swiftly along the Tiber. Rome was at a distance; but the lurid glow of the conflagration cast its reflection upon the placid and glassy stream: fair beyond description was the landscape! soft beyond all art of painter and of poet, the sunlight quivering over the autumnal herbage, and hushing into tender calm the waves of the golden river!

Adrian's eyes were strained towards the towers of the Capitol, distinguished by the flames from the spires and domes around; senseless, and clasped to his guardian breast, Irene was happily unconscious of the horrors of the time.

“They dare not, they dare not,” said the brave Colonna, “touch a hair of that sacred head! If Rienzi fall, the liberties of Rome fall forever! As those towers that surmount the flames, the pride and monument of Rome, he shall rise above the dangers of the hour. Behold, still unscathed amidst the raging element, the Capitol itself is his emblem!”

Scarce had he spoken, when a vast volume of smoke obscured the fires afar off, a dull crash (deadened by the distance)

travelled to his ear, and the next moment the towers on which he gazed had vanished from the scene, and one intense and sullen glare seemed to settle over the atmosphere, making all Rome itself the funeral pyre of THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES!

APPENDIX I.

SOME REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF RIENZI.

THE principal authority from which historians have taken their account of the life and times of Rienzi is a very curious biography by some unknown contemporary; and this, which is in the Roman *patois* of the time, has been rendered not quite unfamiliar to the French and English reader by the work of Père du Cerceau, called "*Conjuration de Nicolas Gabrini, dit de Rienzi*,"¹ which has at once pillaged and deformed the Roman biographer. The biography I refer to was published (and the errors of the former editions revised) by Muratori in his great collection, and has lately been reprinted separately in an improved text, accompanied by notes of much discrimination and scholastic taste, and a comment upon that celebrated poem of Petrarch, "*Spirito Gentil*," which the majority of Italian critics have concurred in considering addressed to Rienzi, in spite of the ingenious arguments to the contrary by the Abbé de Sade.

This biography has been generally lauded for its rare impartiality. And the author does, indeed, praise and blame alike with a most singular appearance of stolid candor. The work, in truth, is one of those not uncommon proofs, of which Boswell's "*Johnson*" is the most striking, — that a very valuable book may be written by a very silly man. The biographer of Rienzi appears more like the historian of Rienzi's clothes, so minute is he on all details of their color and quality, — so silent is he upon everything that could throw light upon the motives of their wearer. In fact, granting the writer every desire to be impartial, he is too foolish to be so. It requires some cleverness to judge accurately of a very clever man in very difficult circumstances; and the worthy biographer is utterly incapable of giving us any clew to the

¹ See, for a specimen of the singular blunders of the Frenchman's work. Appendix II.

actions of Rienzi, — utterly unable to explain the conduct of the man by the circumstances of the time. The weakness of his vision causes him, therefore, often to squint. We must add to his want of wisdom a want of truth, which the Herodotus-like simplicity of his style frequently conceals. He describes things which had no witness as precisely and distinctly as those which he himself had seen. For instance, before the death of Rienzi, in those awful moments when the Senator was alone, unheard, unseen, he coolly informs us of each motion and each thought of Rienzi's with as much detail as if Rienzi had returned from the grave to assist his narration. These obvious inventions have been adopted by Gibbon and others with more good faith than the laws of evidence would warrant. Still, however, to a patient and cautious reader the biography may furnish a much better notion of Rienzi's character than we can glean from the historians who have borrowed from it piecemeal. Such a reader will discard all the writer's reasonings, will think little of his praise or blame, and regard only the facts he narrates, judging them true or doubtful according as the writer had the opportunities of being himself the observer. Thus examining, the reader will find evidence sufficient of Rienzi's genius and Rienzi's failings. Carefully distinguishing between the period of his power as Tribune and that of his power as Senator, he will find the Tribune vain, haughty, and fond of display; but despite the reasonings of the biographer, he will not recognize those faults in the Senator. On the other hand, he will notice the difference between youth and maturity, hope and experience; he will notice in the Tribune vast ambition, great schemes, enterprising activity, which sober into less gorgeous and more quiet colors in the portrait of the Senator. He will find that in neither instance did Rienzi fall from his own faults; he will find that the vulgar moral of ambition, blasted by its own excesses, is not the true moral of the Roman's life; he will find that, both in his abdication as Tribune and his death as Senator, *Rienzi fell from the vices of the people*. The Tribune was a victim to ignorant cowardice, — the Senator, a victim to ferocious avarice. It is this which modern historians have failed to represent. Gibbon records, rightly, that the Count of Minorbino entered Rome with one hundred and fifty soldiers and barricaded the quarter of the Colonna; that the bell of the Capitol sounded; that Rienzi addressed the people; that they were silent and inactive; and that Rienzi then abdicated the government. But for this he calls *Rienzi* "pusillanimous." Is not that epithet to be applied to *the people*? Rienzi invoked them to move against the robber; the people refused to obey. Rienzi wished to fight; the people refused to stir. It was not the cause of Rienzi alone which demanded their exertions, it was the cause of the people; *theirs*, not his, the shame, if one hundred and fifty foreign soldiers mastered Rome, overthrew their liberties, and restored their tyrants! Whatever Rienzi's sins, whatever his

unpopularity, *their* freedom, *their* laws, *their* republic, were at stake; and these they surrendered to one hundred and fifty hirelings! This is the fact that damns them! But Rienzi was not unpopular when he addressed and conjured them; they found no fault with him. "The sighs and groans of the people," says Sismondi, justly, "replied to his," — they could weep, but they would not fight. This strange apathy the modern historians have not accounted for; yet the principal cause was obvious, — Rienzi was *excommunicated*!¹ In stating the fact, these writers have seemed to think that excommunication in Rome in the fourteenth century produced no effect! The effect it did produce I have endeavored in these pages to convey.

The causes of the second fall and final murder of Rienzi are equally misstated by modern narrators. It was from no fault of his, — no injustice, no cruelty, no extravagance; it was not from the execution of Montreal, nor that of Pandolfo di Guido, — *it was from a gabelle on wine and salt that he fell*. To preserve Rome from the tyrants it was necessary to maintain an armed force; to pay the force a tax was necessary; the tax was imposed, — and the multitude joined with the tyrants, and

¹ And this curse I apprehend to have been the more effective in the instance of Rienzi from a fact that it would be interesting and easy to establish; namely, that he owed his rise as much to religious as to civil causes. He aimed evidently to be a religious reformer. All his devices, ceremonies, and watchwords were of a religious character. The monks took part with his enterprise, and joined in the revolution. His letters are full of mystical fanaticism. His references to ancient heroes of Rome are always mingled with invocations to her Christian Saints. The Bible, at that time little read by the public civilians of Italy, is constantly in his hands, and his addresses studded with texts. His very garments were adorned with sacred and mysterious emblems. No doubt the ceremony of his knighthood, which Gibbon ridicules as an act of mere vanity, was but another of his religious extravagances; for he peculiarly dedicated his Knighthood to the service of the Santo Spirito; and his bathing in the vase of Constantine was quite of a piece, not with the vanity of the Tribune, but with the extravagance of the Fanatic. In fact, they tried hard to prove him a heretic; but he escaped a charge under the mild Innocent which a century or two before, or a century or two afterwards, would have sufficed to have sent a dozen Rienzis to the stake. I have dwelt the more upon this point because if it be shown that religious causes operated with those of liberty, we throw a new light upon the whole of that most extraordinary revolution, and its suddenness is infinitely less striking. The deep impression Rienzi produced upon that populace was thus stamped with the spirit of the religious enthusiast more than that of the classical demagogue. And, as in the time of Cromwell, the desire for temporal liberty was warmed and colored by the presence of a holier and more spiritual fervor. "The Good Estate" (*Buono Stato*) of Rienzi reminds us a little of the Good Cause of General Cromwell.

their cry was, "Perish the traitor *who has made the gabelle!*" This was their only charge, this the only crime that their passions and their fury could cite against him.

The faults of Rienzi are sufficiently visible, and I have not unsparingly shown them; but we must judge men, not according as they approach perfection, but according as their good or bad qualities preponderate, — their talents or their weaknesses; the benefits they effected, the evil they wrought. For a man who rose to so great a power, Rienzi's faults were singularly few, — *crimes* he committed none. He is almost the only man who ever rose from the rank of a citizen to a power equal to that of monarchs without a single act of violence or treachery. When *in* power, he was vain, ostentatious, and imprudent, — always an enthusiast, often a fanatic; but his very faults had greatness of soul, and his very fanaticism at once supported his enthusiastic daring and proved his earnest honesty. It is evident that no heinous charge could be brought against him even by his enemies, for all the accusations to which he was subjected, when excommunicated, exiled, fallen, were for two offences which Petrarch rightly deemed the proofs of his virtue and his glory, — first, for declaring Rome to be free; secondly, for pretending that the Romans had a right of choice in the election of the Roman Emperor.¹ Stern, just, and inflexible as he was when Tribune, his fault was never that of *wanton* cruelty. The accusation against him, made by the gentle Petrarch, indeed, was, that he was not determined enough, — that he did not consummate the revolution by exterminating the patrician tyrants. When Senator, he was, without sufficient ground, accused of avarice in the otherwise just and necessary execution of Montreal.² It was natural enough that his enemies and the vulgar should suppose that he executed a creditor to get rid of a debt; but it was inexcusable in later and wiser and fairer writers to repeat so grave a calumny without at least adding the obvious suggestion that the avarice of Rienzi could have been much better gratified by sparing than by destroying the life of one of the richest subjects in Europe. Montreal, we may be quite sure, would have purchased his life at an immeasurably higher price than the paltry sum lent to Rienzi by his brothers. And this is not a probable hypothesis, but a certain fact, for we are expressly

¹ The charge of heresy was dropped.

² Gibbon, in mentioning the execution of Montreal, omits to state that Montreal was more than suspected of conspiracy and treason to restore the Colonna. Matthew Villani records it as a common belief that such truly was the offence of the Provençal. The biographer of Rienzi gives additional evidence of the fact. Gibbon's knowledge of this time was superficial. As one instance of this, he strangely enough represents Montreal as the head of the *first* Free Company that desolated Italy: he took that error from the *Père du Cerceau*.

told that Montreal, "knowing the Tribune was in want of money, offered Rienzi that if he would let him go, he, Montreal, would furnish him not only with twenty thousand florins [four times the amount of Rienzi's debt to him], but with as many soldiers and as much money as he pleased." This offer Rienzi did not attend to. Would he have rejected it had avarice been his motive? And what culpable injustice to mention the vague calumny without citing the practical contradiction! When Gibbon tells us, also, that "the *most* virtuous citizen of Rome," meaning Pandulfo, or Pandulficcio, di Guido,¹ was sacrificed to his jealousy, he a little exaggerates the expression bestowed upon Pandulfo, which is that of "*virtuoso assai*," — and that expression, too, used by a man who styles the robber Montreal "*eccellente uomo, di quale fama suona per tutta la Italia di virtude*"² (so good a moral critic was the writer!); but he also altogether waives all mention of the probabilities, that are sufficiently apparent, of the scheming of Pandulfo to supplant Rienzi and to obtain the "*Signoria del Popolo*." Still, however, if the death of Pandulfo may be considered a blot on the memory of Rienzi, it does not appear that it was this which led to his own fate. The cry of the mob surrounding his palace was not, "*Perish him who executed Pandulfo*," it was, — and this again and again must be carefully noted, — it was nothing more nor less than "*Perish him who has made the gabelle!*"

Gibbon sneers at the military skill and courage of Rienzi. For this sneer there is no cause. His first attempts, his first rise, attested sufficiently his daring and brave spirit; in every danger he was present, never shrinking from a foe so long as he was supported by the people. He distinguished himself at Viterbo, when in the camp of Alborno, in several feats of arms,³ and his end was that of a hero. So much for his courage; as to his military skill, it would be excusable enough if Rienzi — the eloquent and gifted student, called from the closet and the rostrum to assume the command of an army — should have been deficient in the art of war; yet, somehow or other, upon the whole, his arms prospered. He defeated the chivalry of Rome at her gates; and if he did not, after his victory, march to Marino, for which his biographer⁴ and Gibbon blame him, the reason is sufficiently clear, — "*Volea pecunia per soldati*;" *he wanted money for the soldiers!* On his return as Senator it must be remembered that he had to besiege Palestrina, which was considered even by the ancient Romans almost impregnable by position; but during the few weeks he was in power, Palestrina yielded, all his

¹ Matthew Villani speaks of him as a wise and good citizen, of great repute among the people — and this, it seems, he really was.

² "*An excellent man, whose fame for valor resounded throughout all Italy.*"

³ Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. ii. cap. 14.

⁴ In this the anonymous writer compares him gravely to Hannibal, who knew how to conquer, but not how to use his conquest.

open enemies were defeated, the tyrants expelled, Rome free, — and this without support from any party, Papal or Popular ; or, as Gibbon well expresses it, “ suspected by the people — abandoned by the prince.”

On regarding what Rienzi did, we must look to his means, to the difficulties that surrounded him, to the scantiness of his resources. We see a man without rank, wealth, or friends raising himself to the head of a popular government in the metropolis of the Church, in the City of the Empire. We see him reject any title save that of a popular magistrate, establish at one stroke a free constitution, — a new code of law. We see him first expel, then subdue, the fiercest aristocracy in Europe, conquer the most stubborn banditti, rule impartially the most turbulent people, embruted by the violence and sunk in the corruption of centuries. We see him restore trade, establish order, create civilization as by a miracle, receive from crowned heads homage and congratulation, outwit, conciliate, or awe the williest priesthood of the Papal Diplomacy, and raise his native city at once to sudden yet acknowledged eminence over every other state, its superior in arts, wealth, and civilization ; we ask what errors we are to weigh in the opposite balance, and we find an unnecessary ostentation, a fanatical extravagance, and a certain insolent sternness ! But what are such offences, — what the splendor of a banquet, or the ceremony of knighthood, or a few arrogant words, — compared with the vices of almost every prince who was his contemporary ? This is the way to judge character : we must compare men with men, and not with ideals of what men should be. We look to the amazing benefits Rienzi conferred upon his country. We ask his means, and see but his own abilities. His treasury becomes impoverished, his enemies revolt, the Church takes advantage of his weakness, he is ex-communicated, the soldiers refuse to fight, the people refuse to assist, the Barons ravage the country, the ways are closed, the provisions are cut off from Rome.¹ A handful of banditti enter the city, Rienzi proposes to resist them, the People desert, he abdicates. Rapine, Famine, Massacre, ensue, they who deserted, regret, repent ; yet he is still unassisted, alone : now an exile, now a prisoner, his own genius saves him from every peril and restores him to greatness. He returns, the Pope's Legate refuses him arms, the People refuse him money. He re-establishes law and order, expels the tyrants, renounces his former faults,² is prudent, wary,

¹ Allora le strade furo chiuse, li massari de la terre non portavano grano, ogni die nasceva nuovo rumores. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 37.

² This, the second period of his power, has been represented by Gibbon and others as that of his principal faults, and he is evidently at this time no favorite with his contemporaneous biographer ; but looking to what he *did*, we find amazing dexterity, prudence, and energy in the most difficult crises, and *none of his earlier faults*. It is true that he does not show the same brilliant

provident, reigns a few weeks, taxes the People in support of the People, and is torn to pieces! One day of the rule that followed is sufficient to vindicate his reign and avenge his memory; and for centuries afterwards, whenever that wretched and degenerate populace dreamed of glory or sighed for justice, they recalled the bright vision of their own victim, and deplored the fate of Cola di Rienzi. That he was not a tyrant is clear in this: when he was dead, he was bitterly regretted. The People never regret a tyrant! From the unpopularity that springs from other faults there is often a reaction; but there is no reaction in the populace towards their betrayer or oppressor. A thousand biographies cannot decide upon the faults or merits of a ruler like the one fact whether he is beloved or hated ten years after he is dead; but if the ruler has been murdered by the People, and is then regretted by them, their repentance is his acquittal.

I have said that the moral of the Tribune's life, and of this fiction, is not the stale and unprofitable moral that warns the ambition of an individual: more vast, more solemn, and more useful, it addresses itself to nations. If I judge not erringly, it proclaims that, to be great and free, a People must trust, not to individuals, but themselves; that there is no sudden leap from servitude to liberty; that it is to institutions, not to men, that they must look for reforms that last beyond the hour; that their own passions are the real despots they should subdue, their own reason the true regenerator of abuses. With a calm and a noble people, the individual ambition of a citizen can never effect evil; to be impatient of chains is not to be worthy of freedom, — to murder a magistrate

extravagance which, I suspect, dazzled his contemporaries more than his sounder qualities; but we find that in a few weeks he had conquered all his powerful enemies, that his eloquence was as great as ever, his promptitude greater, his diligence indefatigable, his foresight unslumbering. "He alone," says the biographer, "carried on the affairs of Rome; but his officials were slothful and cold." This, too, tortured by a painful disease, already — though yet young — broken and infirm. The only charges against him as Senator were the deaths of Montreal and Pandolfo di Guido, the imposition of the gabelle, and the renunciation of his former habits of rigid abstinence, for indulgence in wine and feasting. Of the first charges, the reader has already been enabled to form a judgment. To the last, alas! the reader must extend indulgence, and for it he may find excuse. We must compassionate even more than condemn the man to whom excitement has become nature, and who resorts to the physical stimulus or the momentary Lethe when the mental exhilarations of hope, youth, and glory begin to desert him. His alleged intemperance, however, which the Romans (a peculiarly sober people) might perhaps exaggerate, and for which he gave the excuse of a thirst produced by disease contracted in the dungeon of Avignon, evidently and confessedly did not in the least diminish his attention to business, which, according to his biographer, was at that time greater than ever.

is not to ameliorate the laws.¹ The People write their own condemnation whenever they use characters of blood; and theirs alone the madness and the crime if they crown a tyrant or butcher a victim.

¹ Rienzi was murdered because the Romans had been in the habit of murdering whenever they were displeased. They had, very shortly before, stoned one magistrate and torn to pieces another. By the same causes and the same career a People may be made to resemble the bravo whose hand wanders to his knife at the smallest affront, and if to-day he poniards the enemy who assaults him, to-morrow he strikes the friend who would restrain.

APPENDIX II.

A WORD UPON THE WORK BY PÈRE DU CERCEAU AND PÈRE BRUMOY ENTITLED "CONJURATION DE NICOLAS GABRINI, DIT DE RIENZI, TYRAN DE ROME."

SHORTLY after the Romance of "Rienzi" first appeared, a translation of the biography compiled by Cerceau and Brumoy was published by Mr. Whittaker. The translator, in a short and courteous advertisement, observes, "That it has always been considered as a work of authority, and even Gibbon appears to have relied on it without further research; ¹ . . . that, as a record of facts, therefore, the work will, it is presumed, be acceptable to the public." The translator has fulfilled his duty with accuracy, elegance, and spirit, and he must forgive me if, in justice to history and Rienzi, I point out a very few from amongst a great many reasons why the joint labor of the two worthy Jesuits cannot be considered either a work of authority or a record of facts. The translator observes in his preface, "that the general outline [of Du Cercean's work] was *probably* furnished by an Italian Life written by a contemporary of Rienzi." The fact, however, is, that Du Cercean's book is little more than a wretched paraphrase of that very Italian Life mentioned by the translator, — full of blunders, from ignorance of the peculiar and antiquated dialect in which the original is written, and of assumptions by the Jesuit himself which rest upon no authority whatever. I will first show, in support of this assertion, what the Italians themselves think of the work of Fathers Brumoy and Du Cercean. The Signor Zefirino Re, who has proved himself singularly and minutely acquainted with the history of that time, and whose notes to the "Life of Rienzi" are characterized by acknowledged acuteness and research, thus describes the manner in which the two Jesuits compounded this valuable "record of facts."

"Father du Cerceau for his work made use of a French translation of the Life by the Italian contemporary printed in Bracciano, 1624, exe-

¹ Here, however, he does injustice to Gibbon.

cuted by Father Sanadon, another Jesuit, from whom he received the MS. This proves that Du Cerceau knew little of our 'volgar lingua' of the fourteenth century. But the errors into which he has run show that even that little was unknown to his guide, and still less to Father Brumoy (however learned and reputed the latter might be in *French literature*), who after the death of Du Cerceau supplied the deficiencies in the first pages of the author's MS., which were, I know not how, lost; and in this part are found the more striking errors in the work, which shall be noticed in the proper place. In the mean time, one specimen will suffice. In the third chapter, book i., Cola, addressing the Romans, says, 'Che lo giubileo, si approssima, che se la gente, la quale verrà al giubileo, li trova sproveduti di annona, le pietre (per metatesi sta scritto le preite) ne porteranno da Roma per rabbia di fame, e le pietre non basteranno a tanta moltitudine.' Il francese traduce: 'Le jubilé approche, et vous n'avez ni provisions ni vivres; les étrangers . . . trouveront votre ville dénuée de tout. Ne comptez point sur les secours des gens d'Église; ils sortiront de la ville, s'ils n'y trouvent de quoi subsister: et d'ailleurs pourroient-ils suffire à la multitude innombrable que se trouvera dans vos murs?'¹ Buon Dio!" exclaims the learned Zefirino, "Buon Dio! le pietre prese per tanta gente di chiesa!"²

Another blunder, little less extraordinary, occurs in chapter vi., in which the ordinances of Rienzi's Buono Stato are recited.

It is set forth as the third ordinance: "Che nulla casa di Roma sia data per terra per alcuna cagione, ma vada in commune;" which simply means that the houses of delinquents should in no instance be razed, but added to the community or confiscated. This law being intended partly to meet the barbarous violences with which the excesses and quarrels of the Barons had half dismantled Rome, and principally to repeal some old penal laws by which the houses of a certain class of offenders might be destroyed; but the French translator construes it, "*Que nulle maison de Rome ne seroit donnée en propre, pour quelque raison que ce pût être, mais que les revenus en appartiendroient au public!*"³

But enough of the blunders arising from ignorance; I must now be permitted to set before the reader a few of the graver offences of wilful assumption and preposterous invention.

When Rienzi condemned some of the Barons to death, the Père thus writes (I take the recent translation published by Mr. Whittaker):—

¹ The English translator could not fail to adopt the Frenchman's ludicrous mistake.

² See Preface to Zefirino Re's edition of the "Life of Rienzi," p. 9, note on Du Cerceau.

³ The English translator makes this law unintelligible: "That no family of Rome shall appropriate to their own use what they think fit, but that the revenues shall appertain to the public!" The revenues of what?

"The next day the Tribune, resolving more than ever to rid himself of his prisoners, ordered tapestries of two colors, red and white, to be laid over the place whereon he held his councils, and which he had made choice of to be the theatre of this bloody tragedy, as the extraordinary tapestry seemed to declare. He afterwards sent a cordelier to every one of the prisoners to administer the sacraments, and then ordered the Capitol bell to be tolled. At that fatal sound and the sight of the confessors, the Lords no longer doubted of sentence of death being passed upon them. They all confessed except the old Colonna, and many received the communion. In the meanwhile the people, *naturally prompt to attend, when their first impetuosity had time to calm, could not without pity behold the dismal preparations which were making. The sight of the bloody color in the tapestry shocked them.* On this first impression they joined in opinion in relation to so many illustrious heads now going to be sacrificed, and lamented more their unhappy catastrophe as no crime had been proved upon them to render them worthy of such barbarous treatment. *Above all, the unfortunate Stephen Colonna, whose birth, age, and affable behavior commanded respect, excited a particular compassion. An universal silence and sorrow reigned among them.* Those who were nearest Rienzi discovered an alteration. They took the opportunity of imploring his mercy towards the prisoners in terms the most affecting and moving."

Will it be believed that in the original from which the Père du Cerceau borrows, or rather imagines, this touching recital, *there is not a single syllable about the pity of the people, nor their shock at the bloody colors of the tapestry, nor their particular compassion for the unfortunate Stephen Colonna?* In fine, the *People* are not even mentioned at all. All that is said is, "Some Roman citizens [*alcuni cittadini Romani*], considering the judgment Rienzi was about to make, interposed with soft and caressing words, and at last changed the opinion of the Tribune;" all the rest is the pure fiction of the ingenious Frenchman! Again, Du Cerceau, describing the appearance of the Barons at this fatal moment, says, "Notwithstanding the grief and despair visible in their countenances, *they showed a noble indignation, generally attendant on innocence in the hour of death.*" What says the authority from which alone, except his own, the good Father could take his account? Why, not a word about this noble indignation or this parade of innocence! The original says simply, that "*the Barons were so frozen with terror that they were unable to speak* [*diventato si gelati che non poteano favellare*]; that the greater part humbled themselves [*e prese penitenza e comunione*];" that when Rienzi addressed them, "*all the Barons* [*come dannati*] stood in sadness."¹ Du Cerceau then proceeds to state that "although he [*Rienzi*] was grieved at heart to behold his victims

¹ See Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. i. cap. 29.

snatched from him, he endeavored to make a merit of it in the eyes of the People." *There is not a word of this in the original!*

So when Rienzi, on a later occasion, placed the Prefect John di Vico in prison, this Jesuit says, "*To put a gloss upon this action before the eyes of the people, Rienzi gave out that the Governor, John di Vico, keeping a correspondence with the conspirators, came with no other view than to betray the Romans.*" And if this scribbler, who pretends to have consulted the Vatican MSS., had looked at the most ordinary authorities, he would have seen that John di Vico *did* come with that view. (See, for Di Vico's secret correspondence with the Barons, La Cron. Bologn., p. 406; and La Cron. Est., p. 444.)

Again, in the battle between the Barons and the Romans at the gates, Du Cerceau thus describes the conduct of the Tribune: "The Tribune, amidst his troops, knew so little of what had passed that seeing at a distance one of his standards fall, he looked upon all as lost, and, casting up his eyes to heaven full of despair, cried out, 'O God! will you then forsake me?' But no sooner was he informed of the entire defeat of his enemies than his dread and cowardice even turned to boldness and arrogance."

Now, in the original all that is said of this is, "That it is true that the standard of the Tribune fell; the Tribune astonished [or, if you please, dismayed, *sbigottio*], stood with his eyes raised to heaven, and could find no other words than, 'O God! hast thou betrayed me?'" This evinced, perhaps, alarm or consternation at the fall of his standard, — a consternation natural, not to a coward, but a fanatic, at such an event. But not a word is said about Rienzi's cowardice in the action itself; it is not stated when the accident happened, — nothing bears out the implication that the Tribune was remote from the contest and knew little of what passed. And if this ignorant Frenchman had *consulted any other contemporaneous historian whatever*, he would have found it asserted by them all that the fight was conducted with great valor, both by the Roman populace and their leader on one side, and the Barons on the other. — G. Vill., lib. xii. cap. 105; Cron. Sen., tom. xv. Murat., p. 119; Cron. Est., p. 444. Yet Gibbon rests his own sarcasm on the Tribune's courage solely on the baseless exaggeration of this Père du Cerceau.

So little, indeed, did this French pretender know of the history of the time and place he treats of, that he imagines the Stephen Colonna who was killed in the battle above mentioned was the *old* Stephen Colonna, and is very pathetic about his "venerable appearance," etc. This error, with regard to a man so eminent as Stephen Colonna the elder, is inexcusable; for had the priest turned over the other pages of the very collection in which he found the biography he deforms, he would have learned that old Stephen Colonna was alive some time after that battle. (Cron. Sen. Murat., tom. xv. p. 121.)

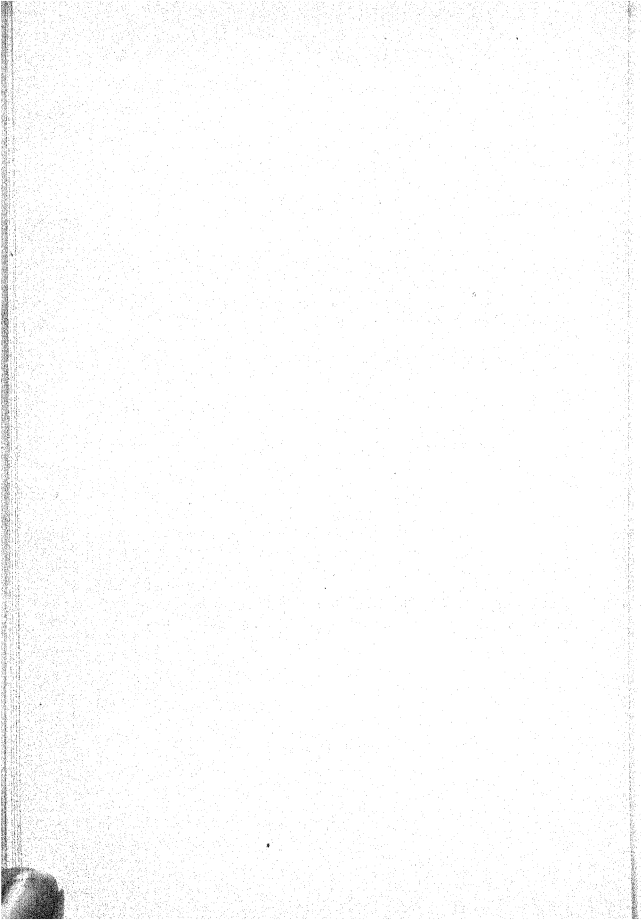
Again, just before Rienzi's expulsion from the office of Tribune, Du Cerceau, translating in his headlong way the old biographer's account of the causes of Rienzi's loss of popularity, says, "He shut himself up in his palace, and his presence was known only by the rigorous punishments which he caused his agents to inflict upon the innocent." Not a word of this in the original.

Again, after the expulsion, Du Cerceau says that the Barons seized upon the "immense riches" he had amassed. The words in the original are, "*grandi ornamenti*," — which are very different things from immense riches. But the most remarkable sins of commission are in this person's account of the second rise and fall of Rienzi under the title of Senator. Of this I shall give but one instance: —

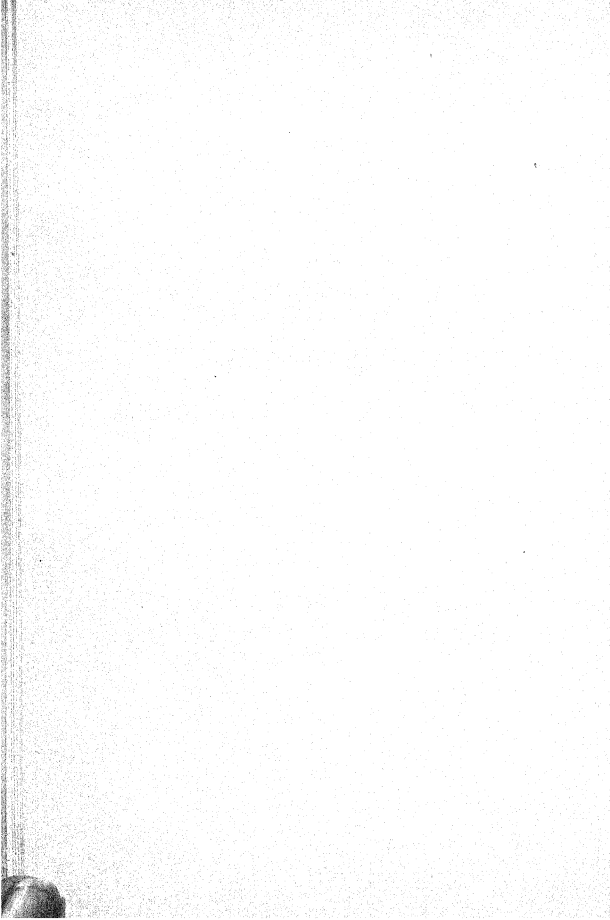
"The Senator, who perceived it, became only the more cruel. His jealousies produced only fresh murders. In the continual dread he was in, that the general discontent would terminate in some secret attempt upon his person, he determined to intimidate the most enterprising, by sacrificing sometimes one, sometimes another, and chiefly those whose riches rendered them the more guilty in his eyes. Numbers were sent every day to the Capitol prison. Happy were those who could get off with the confiscation of their estates!"

Of these grave charges there is not a syllable in the original! And so much for the work of Père Cerceau and Père Brumoy, by virtue of which historians have written of the life and times of Rienzi, and upon the figments of which the most remarkable man in an age crowded with great characters is judged by the general reader!

I must be pardoned for this criticism, which might not have been necessary had not the work to which it relates, in the English translation quoted from (a translation that has no faults but those of the French original), been actually received as an historical and indisputable authority, and opposed with a triumphant air to some passages in my own narrative which were literally taken from the authentic records of the time.



THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE



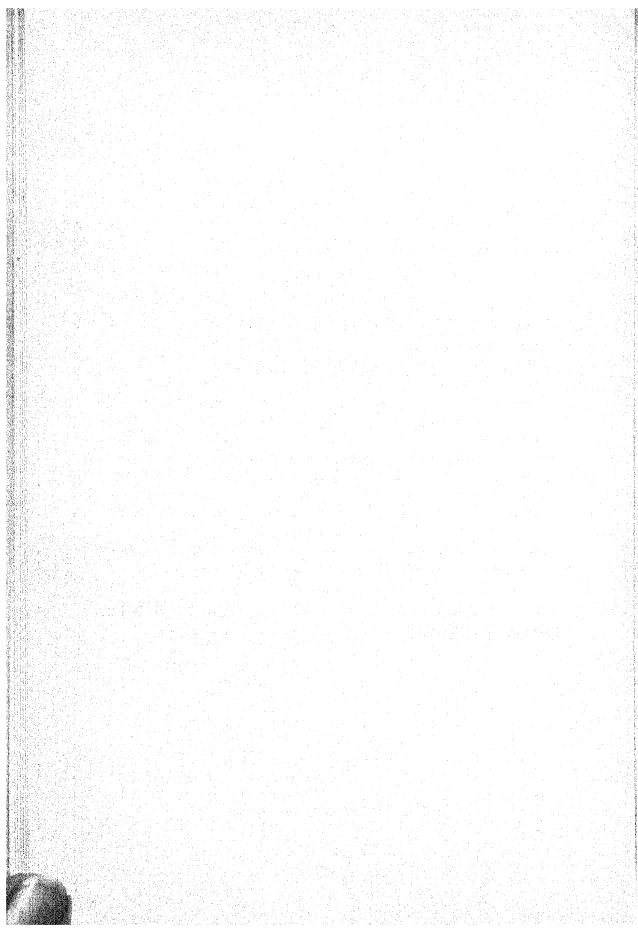
TO HENRY LYTTON BULWER.

ALLOW me, my dear Brother, to dedicate this Work to you. The greater part of it (namely, the tales which vary and relieve the voyages of Gertrude and Trevelyán) was written in the pleasant excursion we made together some years ago. Among the associations — some sad and some pleasing — connected with the general design, none are so agreeable to me as those that remind me of the friendship subsisting between us, and which, unlike that of near relations in general, has grown stronger and more intimate as our footsteps have receded farther from the fields where we played together in our childhood. I dedicate this Work to you with the more pleasure, not only when I remember that it has always been a favourite with yourself, but when I think that it is one of my writings most liked in foreign countries; and I may possibly, therefore, have found a record destined to endure the affectionate esteem which this Dedication is intended to convey.

Yours, etc.

E. L. B.

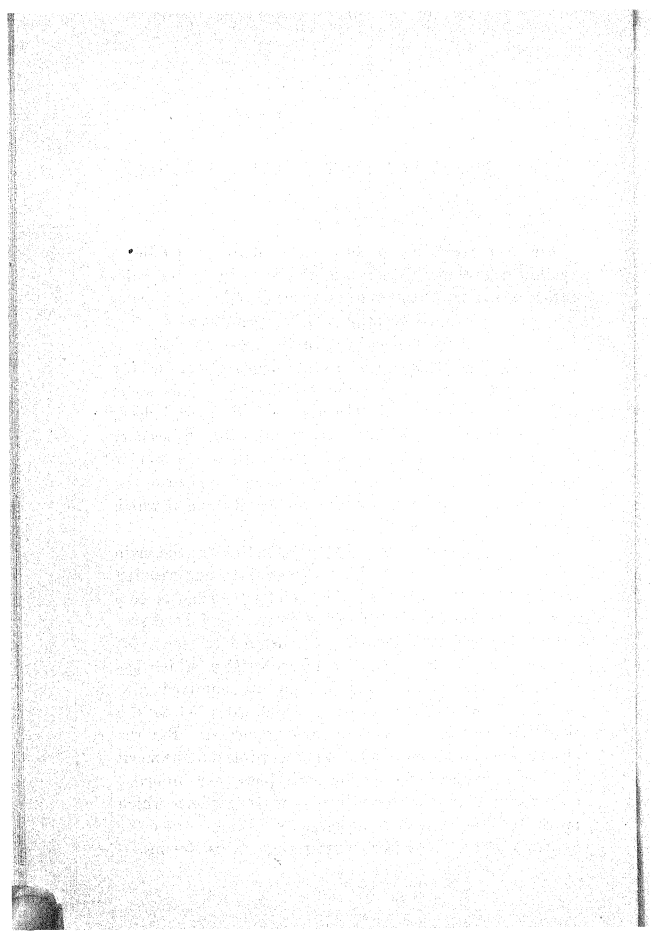
LONDON, *April 23*, 1840.



ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

COULD I prescribe to the critic and to the public, I would wish that this work might be tried by the rules rather of poetry than prose, for according to those rules have been both its conception and its execution; and I feel that something of sympathy with the author's design is requisite to win indulgence for the superstitions he has incorporated with his tale, for the floridity of his style, and the redundancy of his descriptions. Perhaps, indeed, it would be impossible, in attempting to paint the scenery and embody some of the Legends of the Rhine, not to give (it may be, too loosely) the reins to the imagination, or to escape the influence of that wild German spirit which I have sought to transfer to a colder tongue.

I have made the experiment of selecting for the main interest of my work the simplest materials, and weaving upon them the ornaments given chiefly to subjects of a more fanciful nature. I know not how far I have succeeded, but various reasons have conspired to make this the work, above all others that I have written, which has given me the most delight (though not unmixed with melancholy) in producing, and in which my mind for the time has been the most completely absorbed. But the ardour of composition is often disproportioned to the merit of the work; and the public sometimes, nor unjustly, avenges itself for that forgetfulness of its existence which makes the chief charm of an author's solitude, — and the happiest, if not the wisest, inspiration of his dreams.



PREFACE.

WITH the younger class of my readers this work has had the good fortune to find especial favour; perhaps because it is in itself a collection of the thoughts and sentiments that constitute the Romance of youth. It has little to do with the positive truths of our actual life, and does not pretend to deal with the larger passions and more stirring interests of our kind. It is but an episode out of the graver epic of human destinies. It requires no explanation of its purpose, and no analysis of its story; the one is evident, the other simple, — the first seeks but to illustrate visible nature through the poetry of the affections; the other is but the narrative of the most real of mortal sorrows, which the Author attempts to take out of the region of pain by various accessories from the Ideal. The connecting tale itself is but the string that binds into a garland the wild-flowers cast upon a grave.

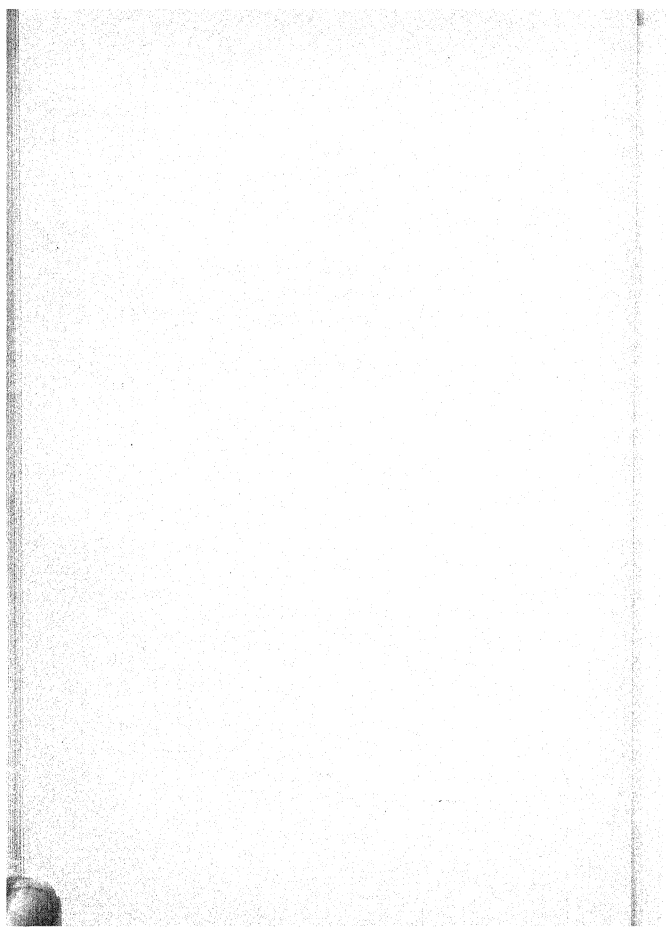
The descriptions of the Rhine have been considered by Germans sufficiently faithful to render this tribute to their land and their legends one of the popular guide-books along the course it illustrates, — especially to such tourists as wish not only to take in with the eye the inventory of the river, but to seize the peculiar spirit which invests the wave and the bank with a beauty that can only be made visible by reflection. He little comprehends the true charm of the Rhine who gazes on the vines on the hill-tops without a thought of the imaginary world with which their recesses have been peopled by the graceful credulity of old; who surveys the steep ruins that over-

shadow the water, untouched by one lesson from the pensive morality of Time. Everywhere around us is the evidence of perished opinions and departed races; everywhere around us, also, the rejoicing fertility of unconquerable Nature, and the calm progress of Man himself through the infinite cycles of decay. He who would judge adequately of a landscape must regard it not only with the painter's eye, but with the poet's. The feelings which the sight of any scene in Nature conveys to the mind — more especially of any scene on which history or fiction has left its trace — must depend upon our sympathy with those associations which make up what may be called the spiritual character of the spot. If indifferent to those associations, we should see only hedgerows and ploughed land in the battle-field of Bannockburn; and the traveller would but look on a dreary waste, whether he stood amidst the piles of the Druid on Salisbury plain, or trod his bewildered way over the broad expanse on which the Chaldæan first learned to number the stars.

To the former editions of this tale was prefixed a poem on "The Ideal," which had all the worst faults of the author's earliest compositions in verse. The present poem (with the exception of a very few lines) has been entirely rewritten, and has at least the comparative merit of being less vague in the thought, and less unpolished in the diction, than that which it replaces.

EMS, 1849.

THE IDEAL WORLD



THE IDEAL WORLD.



I.

THE IDEAL WORLD,—ITS REALM IS EVERYWHERE AROUND US; ITS INHABITANTS ARE THE IMMORTAL PERSONIFICATIONS OF ALL BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS; TO THAT WORLD WE ATTAIN BY THE REPOSE OF THE SENSES.

AROUND "this visible diurnal sphere"

There floats a World that girds us like the space;

On wandering clouds and gliding beams career

Its ever-moving murmurous Populace.

There, all the lovelier thoughts conceived below

Ascending live, and in celestial shapes.

To that bright World, O Mortal, wouldst thou go?

Bind but thy senses, and thy soul escapes:

To care, to sin, to passion close thine eyes;

Sleep in the flesh, and see the Dreamland rise!

Hark to the gush of golden waterfalls,

Or knightly tromps at Archimagian Walls!

In the green hush of Dorian Valleys mark

The River Maid her amber tresses knitting;

When glow-worms twinkle under coverts dark,

And silver clouds o'er summer stars are flitting,

With jocund elves invade "the Moone's sphere,

Or hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear;"¹

Or, list! what time the roseate urns of dawn

Scatter fresh dews, and the first skylark weaves

Joy into song, the blithe Arcadian Faun

Piping to wood-nymphs under Bromian leaves,

¹ "Midsummer Night's Dream."

While slowly gleaming through the purple glade
Come Evian's panther ear, and the pale Naxian Maid.

Such, O Ideal World, thy habitants!

All the fair children of creative creeds,
All the lost tribes of Fantasy are thine, —
From antique Saturn in Dodonian haunts,
Or Pan's first music waked from shepherd reeds,
To the last sprite when Heaven's pale lamps decline,
Heard wailing soft along the solemn Rhine.

II.

OUR DREAMS BELONG TO THE IDEAL. — THE DIVINER LOVE FOR WHICH YOUTH SIGHS NOT ATTAINABLE IN LIFE, BUT THE PURSUIT OF THAT LOVE BEYOND THE WORLD OF THE SENSES PURIFIES THE SOUL AND AWAKES THE GENIUS. — PETRARCH. — DANTE.

Thine are the Dreams that pass the Ivory
With prophet shadows haunting poet eye
Thine the belov'd illusions youth creates
From the dim haze of its own happy skies.
In vain we pine ; we yearn on earth to win
The being of the heart, our boyhood's dream.
The Psyche and the Eros ne'er have been,
Save in Olympus, wedded ! As a stream
Glasses a star, so life the ideal love ;
Restless the stream below, serene the orb above !
Ever the soul the senses shall deceive ;
Here custom chill, there kinder fate bereave :
For mortal lips unmeet eternal vows !
And Eden's flowers for Adam's mournful brows !
We seek to make the moment's angel guest
The household dweller at a human hearth ;
We chase the bird of Paradise, whose nest
Was never found amid the bowers of earth.¹

¹ According to a belief in the East, which is associated with one of the loveliest and most familiar of Oriental superstitions, the bird of Paradise is never seen to rest upon the earth, and its nest is never to be found.

Yet loftier joys the vain pursuit may bring,
 Than sate the senses with the boons of time;
 The bird of Heaven hath still an upward wing,
 The steps it lures are still the steps that climb;
 And in the ascent although the soil be bare,
 More clear the daylight and more pure the air.
 Let Petrarch's heart the human mistress lose,
 He mourns the Laura but to win the Muse.
 Could all the charms which Georgian maids combine
 Delight the soul of the dark Florentine,
 Like one chaste dream of childlike Beatrice
 Awaiting Hell's dark pilgrim in the skies,
 Snatched from below to be the guide above,
 And clothe Religion in the form of Love?¹

III.

GENIUS, LIFTING ITS LIFE TO THE IDEAL, BECOMES ITSELF A PURE IDEA: IT MUST COMPREHEND ALL EXISTENCE, ALL HUMAN SINS AND SUFFERINGS; BUT IN COMPREHENDING, IT TRANSMUTES THEM. — THE POET IN HIS TWO-FOLD BEING, — THE ACTUAL AND THE IDEAL. — THE INFLUENCE OF GENIUS OVER THE STERNEST REALITIES OF EARTH; OVER OUR PASSIONS; WARS AND SUPERSTITIONS. — ITS IDENTITY IS WITH HUMAN PROGRESS. — ITS AGENCY, EVEN WHERE UNACKNOWLEDGED, IS UNIVERSAL.

Oh, thou true Iris! sporting on thy bow
 Of tears and smiles! Jove's herald, Poetry,
 Thou reflex image of all joy and woe,
Both fused in light by thy dear fantasy!
 Lo! from the clay how Genius lifts its life,
 And grows one pure Idea, one calm soul!
 True, its own clearness must reflect our strife;
 True, its completeness must comprise our whole:
 But as the sun transmutes the sullen hues
 Of marsh-grown vapours into vermeil dyes,

¹ It is supposed by many of the commentators on Dante, that in the form of his lost Beatrice, who guides him in his Vision of Heaven, he allegorizes Religious Faith.

And melts them later into twilight dews,
Shedding on flowers the baptism of the skies;
So glows the Ideal in the air we breathe,
So from the fumes of sorrow and of sin,
Doth its warm light in rosy colours wreath
Its playful cloudland, storing balms within.

Survey the Poet in his mortal mould,
Man, amongst men, descended from his throne!
The moth that chased the star now frets the fold,
Our cares, our faults, our follies are his own.
Passions as idle, and desires as vain,
Vex the wild heart, and dupe the erring brain.
From Freedom's field the recreant Horace flies
To kiss the hand by which his country dies;
From Mary's grave the mighty Peasant turns,
And hoarse with orgies rings the laugh of Burns.
While Rousseau's lips a lackey's vices own,—
Lips that could draw the thunder on a throne!
But when from Life the Actual GENIUS springs,
When, self-transformed by its own magic rod,
It snaps the fetters and expands the wings,
And drops the fleshly garb that veiled the god,
How the mists vanish as the form ascends!
How in its aureole every sunbeam blends!
By the Arch-Brightener of Creation seen,
How dim the crowns on perishable brows!
The snows of Atlas melt beneath the sheen,
Through Thebaid caves the rushing splendour flows.
Cimmerian glooms with Asian beams are bright,
And Earth reposes in a belt of light.
Now stern as Vengeance shines the awful form,
Armed with the bolt and glowing through the storm;
Sets the great deeps of human passion free,
And whelms the bulwarks that would breast the sea.
Roused by its voice the ghastly Wars arise,
Mars reddens earth, the Valkyrs pale the skies;
Dim Superstition from her hell escapes,

With all her shadowy brood of monster shapes;
Here life itself the scowl of Typhon¹ takes;
There Conscience shudders at Alecto's snakes;
From Gothic graves at midnight yawning wide,
In gory cerements gibbering spectres glide;
And where o'er blasted heaths the lightnings flame,
Black secret hags "do deeds without a name!"
Yet through its direst agencies of awe,
Light marks its presence and pervades its law,
And, like Orion when the storms are loud,
It links creation while it gilds a cloud.
By ruthless Thor, free Thought, frank Honour stand,
Fame's grand desire, and zeal for Fatherland.
The grim Religion of Barbarian Fear
With some Hereafter still connects the Here,
Lifts the gross sense to some spiritual source,
And thrones some Jove above the Titan Force,
Till, love completing what in awe began,
From the rude savage dawns the thoughtful man.

Then, oh, behold the Glorious comforter!

Still bright'ning worlds but gladd'ning now the hearth,
Or like the lustre of our nearest star,

Fused in the common atmosphere of earth.
It sports like hope upon the captive's chain;
Descends in dreams upon the couch of pain;
To wonder's realm allures the earnest child;
To the chaste love refines the instinct wild;
And as in waters the reflected beam,
Still where we turn, glides with us up the stream,
And while in truth the whole expanse is bright,
Yields to each eye its own fond path of light,—
So over life the rays of Genius fall,
Give each his track because illuming all.

¹ The gloomy Typhon of Egypt assumes many of the mystic attributes of the Principle of Life which, in the Grecian Apotheosis of the Indian Bacchus, is represented in so genial a character of exuberant joy and everlasting youth.

IV.

FORGIVENESS TO THE ERRORS OF OUR BENEFACTORS.

Hence is that secret pardon we bestow
 In the true instinct of the grateful heart,
 Upon the Sons of Song. The good they do
 In the clear world of their Uranian art
 Endures forever; while the evil done
 In the poor drama of their mortal scene,
 Is but a passing cloud before the sun;
 Space hath no record where the mist hath been.
 Boots it to us if Shakspeare erred like man?
 Why idly question that most mystic life?
 Eno' the giver in his gifts to scan;
 To bless the sheaves with which thy fields are rife,
 Nor, blundering, guess through what obstructive clay
 The glorious corn-seed struggled up to day.

V.

THE IDEAL IS NOT CONFINED TO POETS. — ALGERNON SIDNEY RECOGNIZES HIS IDEAL IN LIBERTY, AND BELIEVES IN ITS TRIUMPH WHERE THE MERE PRACTICAL MAN COULD BEHOLD BUT ITS RUINS; YET LIBERTY IN THIS WORLD MUST EVER BE AN IDEAL, AND THE LAND THAT IT PROMISES CAN BE FOUND BUT IN DEATH.

But not to you alone, O Sons of Song,
 The wings that float the loftier airs along.
 Whoever lifts us from the dust we are,
 Beyond the sensual to spiritual goals;
 Who from the MOMENT and the SELF afar
 By deathless deeds allures reluctant souls,
 Gives the warm life to what the Limner draws, —
 Plato but thought what godlike Cato was.¹
 Recall the Wars of England's giant-born,
 Is Elgot's voice, is Hampden's death in vain?

¹ What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was. — POPE.

Have all the meteors of the vernal morn
But wasted light upon a frozen main?
Where is that child of Carnage, Freedom, flown?
The Sybarite lolls upon the martyr's throne.
Lewd, ribald jests succeed to solemn zeal;
And things of silk to Cromwell's men of steel.
Cold are the hosts the tromps of Ireton thrilled,
And hushed the senates Vane's large presence filled.
In what strong heart doth the old manhood dwell?
Where art thou, Freedom? Look! in Sidney's cell!
There still as stately stands the living Truth,
Smiling on age as it had smiled on youth.
Her forts dismantled, and her shrines o'erthrown,
The headsman's block her last dread altar-stone,
No sanction left to Reason's vulgar hope,
Far from the wrecks expands her prophet's scope.
Millennial morns the tombs of Kedron gild,
The hands of saints the glorious walls rebuild,—
Till each foundation garnished with its gem,
High o'er Gehenna flames Jerusalem!
O thou blood-stained Ideal of the free,
Whose breath is heard in clarions, — Liberty!
Sublimed for thy grand illusions past,
Thou spring'st to Heaven, — Religion at the last.
Alike below, or commonwealths or thrones,
Where'er men gather some crushed victim groans;
Only in death thy real form we see,
All life is bondage, — souls alone are free.
Thus through the waste the wandering Hebrews went,
Fire on the march, but cloud upon the tent.
At last on Pisgah see the prophet stand,
Before his vision spreads the PROMISED LAND;
But where revealed the Canaan to his eye? —
Upon the mountain he ascends to die.

VI.

YET ALL HAVE TWO ESCAPES INTO THE IDEAL WORLD; NAMELY,
MEMORY AND HOPE. — EXAMPLE OF HOPE IN YOUTH, HOWEVER
EXCLUDED FROM ACTION AND DESIRE. — NAPOLEON'S SON.

Yet whatsoever be our bondage here,
All have two portals to the phantom sphere.
What hath not glided through those gates that ope
Beyond the Hour, to MEMORY or to HOPE!
Give Youth the Garden, — still it soars above,
Seeks some far glory, some diviner love.
Place Age amidst the Golgotha, — its eyes
Still quit the graves, to rest upon the skies;
And while the dust, unheeded, moulders there,
Track some lost angel through cerulean air.

Lo! where the Austrian binds, with formal chain,
The crownless son of earth's last Charlemagne, —
Him, at whose birth laughed all the violet vales
(While yet unfallen stood thy sovereign star,
O Lucifer of nations). Hark, the gales
Swell with the shout from all the hosts, whose war
Rended the Alps, and crimsoned Memphian Nile, —
"Way for the coming of the Conqueror's Son:
Woe to the Merchant-Carthage of the Isle!
Woe to the Scythian ice-world of the Don!
O Thunder Lord, thy Lemnian bolts prepare,
The Eagle's eyry hath its eagle heir!"
Hark, at that shout from north to south, gray Power
Quails on its weak, hereditary thrones;
And widowed mothers prophesy the hour
Of future carnage to their cradled sons.
What! shall our race to blood be thus consigned,
And Até claim an heirloom in mankind?
Are these red lots unshaken in the urn?
Years pass; approach, pale Questioner, and learn

Chained to his rock, with brows that vainly frown,
 The fallen Titan sinks in darkness down!
 And sadly gazing through his gilded grate,
 Behold the child whose birth was as a fate!
 Far from the land in which his life began;
 Walled from the healthful air of hardy man;
 Reared by cold hearts, and watched by jealous eyes,
 His guardians jailers, and his comrades spies.
 Each trite convention courtly fears inspire
 To stint experience and to dwarf desire;
 Narrows the action to a puppet stage,
 And trains the eaglet to the starling's cage.
 On the dejected brow and smileless cheek,
 What weary thought the languid lines bespeak;
 Till drop by drop, from jaded day to day,
 The sickly life-streams ooze themselves away.
 Yet oft in HOPE a boundless realm was thine,
 That vaguest Infinite,— the Dream of Fame;
 Son of the sword that first made kings divine,
 Heir to man's grandest royalty,— a Name!
 Then didst thou burst upon the startled world,
 And keep the glorious promise of thy birth;
 Then were the wings that bear the bolt unfurled,
 A monarch's voice cried, "Place upon the earth!"
 A new Philippi gained a second Rome,
 And the Son's sword avenged the greater Cæsar's doom.

VII.

EXAMPLE OF MEMORY AS LEADING TO THE IDEAL, — AMIDST LIFE
 HOWEVER HUMBLE, AND IN A MIND HOWEVER IGNORANT. — THE
 VILLAGE WIDOW.

But turn the eye to life's sequestered vale
 And lowly roofs remote in hamlets green.
 Oft in my boyhood where the moss-grown pale
 Fenced quiet graves, a female form was seen;
 Each eve she sought the melancholy ground,

And lingering paused, and wistful looked around.
If yet some footstep rustled through the grass,
Timorous she shrunk, and watched the shadow pass;
Then, when the spot lay lone amidst the gloom,
Crept to one grave too humble for a tomb,
There silent bowed her face above the dead,
For, if in prayer, the prayer was inly said;
Still as the moonbeam, paused her quiet shade,
Still as the moonbeam, through the yews to fade.
Whose dust thus hallowed by so fond a care?
What the grave saith not, let the heart declare.

On yonder green two orphan children played;
By yonder rill two plighted lovers strayed;
In yonder shrine two lives were blent in one,
And joy-bells chimed beneath a summer sun.
Poor was their lot, their bread in labour found;
No parent blessed them, and no kindred owned;
They smiled to hear the wise their choice condemn;
They loved — they loved — and love was wealth to them!
Hark — one short week — again the holy bell!
Still shone the sun; but dirge like boomed the knell,—
The icy hand had severed breast from breast;
Left life to toil, and summoned Death to rest.
Full fifty years since then have passed away,
Her cheek is furrowed, and her hair is gray.
Yet, when she speaks of *him* (the times are rare),
Hear in her voice how youth still trembles there.
The very name of that young life that died
Still heaves the bosom, and recalls the bride.
Lone o'er the widow's hearth those years have fled,
The daily toil still wins the daily bread;
No books deck sorrow with fantastic dyes;
Her fond romance her woman heart supplies;
And, haply in the few still moments given,
(Day's taskwork done), to memory, death, and heaven,
To that unuttered poem may belong
Thoughts of such pathos as had beggared song.

VIII.

HENCE IN HOPE, MEMORY, AND PRAYER, ALL OF US ARE POETS.

Yes, while thou hopest, music fills the air,
While thou rememberest, life reclothes the clod;
While thou canst feel the electric chain of prayer,
Breathe but a thought, and be a soul with God!
Let not these forms of matter bound thine eye.
He who the vanishing point of Human things
Lifts from the landscape, lost amidst the sky,
Has found the Ideal which the poet sings,
Has pierced the pall around the senses thrown,
And is himself a poet, though unknown.

IX.

APPLICATION OF THE POEM TO THE TALE TO WHICH IT IS PRE-
FIXED. — THE RHINE, — ITS IDEAL CHARACTER IN ITS HISTORI-
CAL AND LEGENDARY ASSOCIATIONS.

Eno'! — my song is closing, and to thee,
Land of the North, I dedicate its lay;
As I have done the simple tale to be
The drama of this prelude!

Far away
Rolls the swift Rhine beneath the starry ray;
But to my ear its haunted waters sigh;
Its moonlight mountains glimmer on my eye;
On wave, on marge, as on a wizard's glass,
Imperial ghosts in dim procession pass;
Lords of the wild, the first great Father-men,
Their fane the hill-top, and their home the glen;
Frowning they fade; a bridge of steel appears
With frank-eyed Cæsar smiling through the spears;
The march moves onwards, and the mirror brings
The Gothic crowns of Carlovingian kings:
Vanished alike! The Hermit rears his Cross,
And barbs neigh shrill, and plumes in tumult toss,

While (knighthood's sole sweet conquest from the Moor)
Sings to Arabian lutes the Tourbadour.

Not yet, not yet; still glide some lingering shades,
Still breathe some murmurs as the starlight fades,
Still from her rock I hear the Siren call,
And see the tender ghost in Roland's mouldering hall!

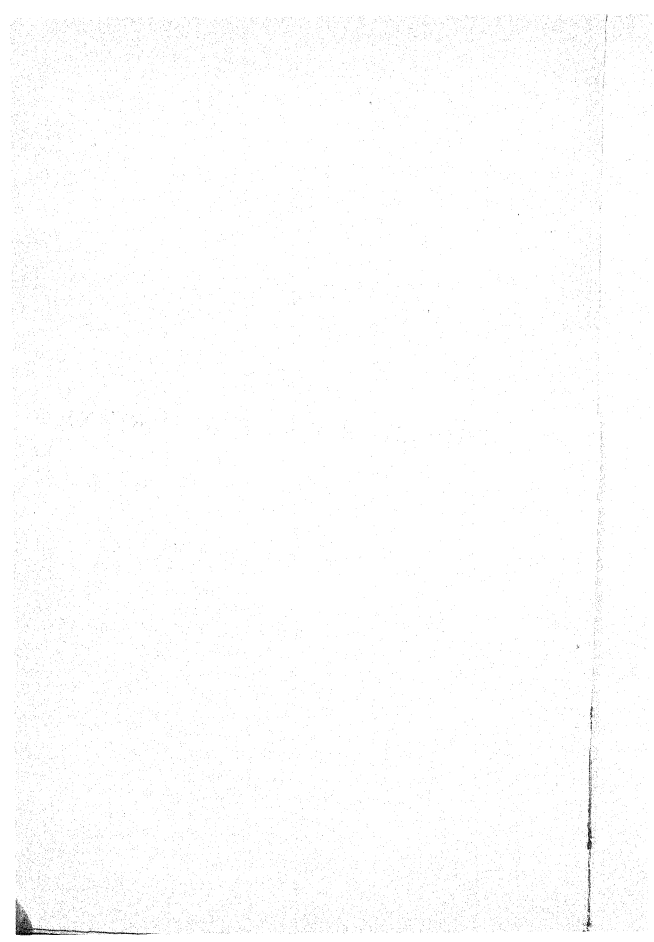
X.

APPLICATION OF THE POEM CONTINUED. — THE IDEAL LENDS ITS
AID TO THE MOST FAMILIAR AND THE MOST ACTUAL SORROW OF
LIFE. — FICTION COMPARED TO SLEEP, — IT STRENGTHENS WHILE
IT SOOTHES.

Trite were the tale I tell of love and doom,
(Whose life hath loved not, whose not mourned a tomb?)
But fiction draws a poetry from grief,
As art its healing from the withered leaf.
Play thou, sweet Fancy, round the sombre truth,
Crown the sad Genius ere it lower the torch!
When death the altar and the victim youth,
Flutes fill the air, and garlands deck the porch.
As down the river drifts the Pilgrim sail,
Clothe the rude hill-tops, lull the Northern gale;
With childlike lore the fatal course beguile,
And brighten death with Love's untiring smile.
Along the banks let fairy forms be seen
"By fountain clear, or spangled starlike sheen."¹
Let sound and shape to which the sense is dull
Haunt the soul opening on the Beautiful.
And when at length, the symbol voyage done,
Surviving Grief shrinks lonely from the sun,
By tender types show Grief what memories bloom
From lost delight, what fairies guard the tomb.
Scorn not the dream, O world-worn; pause a while,
New strength shall nerve thee as the dreams beguile,
Stung by the rest, less far shall seem the goal!
As sleep to life, so fiction to the soul.

¹ "Midsummer Night's Dream."

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE



THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO QUEEN NYMPHALIN.

IN one of those green woods which belong so peculiarly to our island (for the Continent has its forests, but England its woods) there lived, a short time ago, a charming little fairy called Nymphalin. I believe she is descended from a younger branch of the house of Mab; but perhaps that may only be a genealogical fable, for your fairies are very susceptible to the pride of ancestry, and it is impossible to deny that they fall somewhat reluctantly into the liberal opinions so much in vogue at the present day.

However that may be, it is quite certain that all the courtiers in Nymphalin's domain (for she was a queen fairy) made a point of asserting her right to this illustrious descent; and accordingly she quartered the Mab arms with her own,—three acorns vert, with a grasshopper rampant. It was as merry a little court as could possibly be conceived, and on a fine midsummer night it would have been worth while attending the queen's balls; that is to say, if you could have got a ticket,—a favour not obtained without great interest.

But, unhappily, until both men and fairies adopt Mr. Owen's proposition, and live in parallelograms, they will always be the victims of *ennui*. And Nymphalin, who had been disappointed in love, and was still unmarried, had for the last five or six months been exceedingly tired even of giv-

ing balls. She yawned very frequently, and consequently yawning became a fashion.

"But why don't we have some new dances, my Pipalee?" said Nymphalin to her favourite maid of honour; "these waltzes are very old-fashioned."

"Very old-fashioned," said Pipalee.

The queen gaped, and Pipalee did the same.

It was a gala night; the court was held in a lone and beautiful hollow, with the wild brake closing round it on every side, so that no human step could easily gain the spot. Wherever the shadows fell upon the brake a glow-worm made a point of exhibiting itself, and the bright August moon sailed slowly above, pleased to look down upon so charming a scene of merriment; for they wrong the moon who assert that she has an objection to mirth,—with the mirth of fairies she has all possible sympathy. Here and there in the thicket the scarce honeysuckles — in August honeysuckles are somewhat out of season — hung their rich festoons, and at that moment they were crowded with the elderly fairies, who had given up dancing and taken to scandal. Besides the honeysuckle you might see the hawkweed and the white convolvulus, varying the soft verdure of the thicket; and mushrooms in abundance had sprung up in the circle, glittering in the silver moonlight, and acceptable beyond measure to the dancers: every one knows how agreeable a thing tents are in a *fête champêtre*! I was mistaken in saying that the brake closed the circle *entirely* round; for there was one gap, scarcely apparent to mortals, through which a fairy at least might catch a view of a brook that was close at hand, rippling in the stars, and checkered at intervals by the rich weeds floating on the surface, interspersed with the delicate arrowhead and the silver water-lily. Then the trees themselves, in their prodigal variety of hues,—the blue, the purple, the yellowing tint, the tender and silvery verdure, and the deep mass of shade frowning into black; the willow, the elm, the ash, the fir, and the lime, "and, best of all, Old England's haunted oak;" these hues were broken again into a thousand minor and subtler shades as the twinkling stars pierced the foliage,

or the moon slept with a richer light upon some favoured glade.

It was a gala night; the elderly fairies, as I said before, were chatting among the honeysuckles; the young were flirting, and dancing, and making love; the middle-aged talked politics under the mushrooms; and the queen herself and half-a-dozen of her favourites were yawning their pleasure from a little mound covered with the thickest moss.

"It has been very dull, madam, ever since Prince Fayzenheim left us," said the fairy Nip.

The queen sighed.

"How handsome the prince is!" said Pipalee.

The queen blushed.

"He wore the prettiest dress in the world; and what a mustache!" cried Pipalee, fanning herself with her left wing.

"He was a coxcomb," said the lord treasurer, sourly. The lord treasurer was the honestest and most disagreeable fairy at court; he was an admirable husband, brother, son, cousin, uncle, and godfather,—it was these virtues that had made him a lord treasurer. Unfortunately they had not made him a sensible fairy. He was like Charles the Second in one respect, for he never did a wise thing; but he was not like him in another, for he very often said a foolish one.

The queen frowned.

"A young prince is not the worse for that," retorted Pipalee. "Heigho! does your Majesty think his Highness likely to return?"

"Don't tease me," said Nymphalin, pettishly.

The lord treasurer, by way of giving the conversation an agreeable turn, reminded her Majesty that there was a prodigious accumulation of business to see to, especially that difficult affair about the emmet-wasp loan. Her Majesty rose, and leaning on Pipalee's arm, walked down to the supper tent.

"Pray," said the fairy Trip to the fairy Nip, "what is all this talk about Prince Fayzenheim? Excuse my ignorance; I am only just out, your know."

"Why," answered Nip, a young courtier, not a marrying fairy, but very seductive, "the story runs thus: Last summer

a foreigner visited us, calling himself Prince Fayzenheim: one of your German fairies, I fancy; no great things, but an excellent waltzer. He wore long spurs, made out of the stings of the horse-flies in the Black Forest; his cap sat on one side, and his mustachios curled like the lip of the dragon-flower. He was on his travels, and amused himself by making love to the queen. You can't fancy, dear Trip, how fond she was of hearing him tell stories about the strange creatures of Germany,—about wild huntsmen, water-sprites, and a pack of such stuff," added Nip, contemptuously, for Nip was a freethinker.

"In short?" said Trip.

"In short, she loved," cried Nip, with a theatrical air.

"And the prince?"

"Packed up his clothes, and sent on his travelling-carriage, in order that he might go at his ease on the top of a stage-pigeon; in short—as you say—in short, he deserted the queen, and ever since she has set the fashion of yawning."

"It was very naughty in him," said the gentle Trip.

"Ah, my dear creature," cried Nip, "if it had been *you* to whom he had paid his addresses!"

Trip simpered, and the old fairies from their seats in the honeysuckles observed she was "sadly conducted;" but the Trips had never been *too* respectable.

Meanwhile the queen, leaning on Pipalee, said, after a short pause, "Do you know I have formed a plan!"

"How delightful!" cried Pipalee. "Another gala!"

"Pooh, surely even you must be tired with such levities: the spirit of the age is no longer frivolous; and I dare say as the march of gravity proceeds, we shall get rid of galas altogether." The queen said this with an air of inconceivable wisdom, for the "Society for the Diffusion of General Stupefaction" had been recently established among the fairies, and its tracts had driven all the light reading out of the market. "The Penny Proser" had contributed greatly to the increase of knowledge and yawning, so visibly progressive among the courtiers.

"No," continued Nymphalin; "I have thought of something better than galas. Let us travel!"

Pipalee clasped her hands in ecstasy.

"Where shall we travel?"

"Let us go up the Rhine," said the queen, turning away her head. "We shall be amazingly welcomed; there are fairies without number all the way by its banks, and various distant connections of ours whose nature and properties will afford interest and instruction to a philosophical mind."

"Number Nip, for instance," cried the gay Pipalee.

"The Red Man!" said the graver Nymphalin.

"Oh, my queen, what an excellent scheme!" and Pipalee was so lively during the rest of the night that the old fairies in the honeysuckle insinuated that the lady of honour had drunk a buttercup too much of the Maydew.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOVERS.

I WISH only for such readers as give themselves heart and soul up to me,—if they begin to cavil I have done with them; their fancy should put itself entirely under my management; and, after all, ought they not to be too glad to get out of this hackneyed and melancholy world, to be run away with by an author who promises them something new?

From the heights of Bruges, a Mortal and his betrothed gazed upon the scene below. They saw the sun set slowly amongst purple masses of cloud, and the lover turned to his mistress and sighed deeply; for her cheek was delicate in its blended roses, beyond the beauty that belongs to the hues of health; and when he saw the sun sinking from the world, the thought came upon him that *she* was his sun, and the glory that she shed over his life might soon pass away into the bosom of the "ever-during Dark." But against the clouds rose one of the many spires that characterize the town of Bruges; and on that spire, tapering into heaven, rested the

eyes of Gertrude Vane. The different objects that caught the gaze of each was emblematic both of the different channel of their thoughts and the different elements of their nature: he thought of the sorrow, she of the consolation; his heart prophesied of the passing away from earth, hers of the ascension into heaven. The lower part of the landscape was wrapped in shade; but just where the bank curved round in a mimic bay, the waters caught the sun's parting smile, and rippled against the herbage that clothed the shore, with a scarcely noticeable wave. There are two of the numerous mills which are so picturesque a feature of that country, standing at a distance from each other on the rising banks, their sails perfectly still in the cool silence of the evening, and adding to the rustic tranquillity which breathed around. For to me there is something in the still sails of one of those inventions of man's industry peculiarly eloquent of repose: the rest seems typical of the repose of our own passions, short and uncertain, contrary to their natural ordination; and doubly impressive from the feeling which admonishes us how precarious is the stillness, how utterly dependent on every wind rising at any moment and from any quarter of the heavens! They saw before them no living forms, save of one or two peasants yet lingering by the water-side.

Trevlyan drew closer to his Gertrude; for his love was inexpressibly tender, and his vigilant anxiety for her made his stern frame feel the first coolness of the evening even before she felt it herself.

"Dearest, let me draw your mantle closer round you."

Gertrude smiled her thanks.

"I feel better than I have done for weeks," said she; "and when once we get into the Rhine, you will see me grow so strong as to shock all your interest for me."

"Ah, would to Heaven my interest for you may be put to such an ordeal!" said Trevlyan; and they turned slowly to the inn, where Gertrude's father already awaited them.

Trevlyan was of a wild, a resolute, and an active nature. Thrown on the world at the age of sixteen, he had passed his youth in alternate pleasure, travel, and solitary study. At the

age in which manhood is least susceptible to caprice, and most perhaps to passion, he fell in love with the loveliest person that ever dawned upon a poet's vision. I say this without exaggeration, for Gertrude Vane's was indeed the beauty, but the perishable beauty, of a dream. It happened most singularly to Trevlyan (but he was a singular man), that being naturally one whose affections it was very difficult to excite, he should have fallen in love at first sight with a person whose disease, already declared, would have deterred any other heart from risking its treasures on a bark so utterly unfitted for the voyage of life. Consumption, but consumption in its most beautiful shape, had set its seal upon Gertrude Vane, when Trevlyan first saw her, and at once loved. He knew the danger of the disease; he did not, except at intervals, deceive himself; he wrestled against the new passion: but, stern as his nature was, he could not conquer it. He loved, he confessed his love, and Gertrude returned it.

In a love like this, there is something ineffably beautiful,—it is essentially the poetry of passion. Desire grows hallowed by fear, and, scarce permitted to indulge its vent in the common channel of the senses, breaks forth into those vague yearnings, those lofty aspirations, which pine for the Bright, the Far, the Unattained. It is "the desire of the moth for the star;" it is the love of the soul!

Gertrude was advised by the faculty to try a southern climate; but Gertrude was the daughter of a German mother, and her young fancy had been nursed in all the wild legends and the alluring visions that belong to the children of the Rhine. Her imagination, more romantic than classic, yearned for the vine-clad hills and haunted forests which are so fertile in their spells to those who have once drunk, even sparingly, of the Literature of the North. Her desire strongly expressed, her declared conviction that if any change of scene could yet arrest the progress of her malady it would be the shores of the river she had so longed to visit, prevailed with her physicians and her father, and they consented to that pilgrimage along the Rhine on which Gertrude, her father, and her lover were now bound.

It was by the green curve of the banks which the lovers saw from the heights of Bruges that our fairy travellers met. They were reclining on the water-side, playing at dominos with eye-bright and the black specks of the trefoil; namely, Pipalee, Nip, Trip, and the lord treasurer (for that was all the party selected by the queen for her travelling *cortége*), and waiting for her Majesty, who, being a curious little elf, had gone round the town to reconnoitre.

"Bless me!" said the lord treasurer; "what a mad freak is this! Crossing that immense pond of water! And was there ever such bad grass as this? One may see that the fairies thrive ill here."

"You are always discontented, my lord," said Pipalee; "but then you are somewhat too old to travel,—at least, unless you go in your nutshell and four."

The lord treasurer did not like this remark, so he muttered a peevish pshaw, and took a pinch of honeysuckle dust to console himself for being forced to put up with so much frivolity.

At this moment, ere the moon was yet at her middest height, Nymphalin joined her subjects.

"I have just returned," said she, with a melancholy expression on her countenance, "from a scene that has almost renewed in me that sympathy with human beings which of late years our race has well-nigh relinquished."

"I hurried through the town without noticing much food for adventure. I paused for a moment on a fat citizen's pillow, and bade him dream of love. He woke in a fright, and ran down to see that his cheeses were safe. I swept with a light wing over a politician's eyes, and straightway he dreamed of theatres and music. I caught an undertaker in his first nap, and I have left him whirled into a waltz. For what would be sleep if it did not contrast life? Then I came to a solitary chamber, in which a girl, in her tenderest youth, knelt by the bedside in prayer, and I saw that the death-spirit had passed over her, and the blight was on the leaves of the rose. The room was still and hushed, the angel of Purity kept watch there. Her heart was full of love, and yet

of holy thoughts, and I bade her dream of the long life denied to her,— of a happy home, of the kisses of her young lover, of eternal faith, and unwaning tenderness. Let her at least enjoy in dreams what Fate has refused to Truth! And, passing from the room, I found her lover stretched in his cloak beside the door; for he reads with a feverish and desperate prophecy the doom that waits her; and so loves he the very air she breathes, the very ground she treads, that when she has left his sight he creeps, silently and unknown to her, to the nearest spot hallowed by her presence, anxious that while yet she is on earth not an hour, not a moment, should be wasted upon other thoughts than those that belong to her; and feeling a security, a fearful joy, in lessening the distance that *now* only momentarily divides them. And that love seemed to me not as the love of the common world, and I stayed my wings and looked upon it as a thing that centuries might pass and bring no parallel to, in its beauty and its melancholy truth. But I kept away the sleep from the lover's eyes, for well I knew that sleep was a tyrant, that shortened the brief time of waking tenderness for the living, yet spared him; and one sad, anxious thought of her was sweeter, in spite of its sorrow, than the brightest of fairy dreams. So I left him awake, and watching there through the long night, and felt that the children of earth have still something that unites them to the spirits of a finer race, so long as they retain amongst them the presence of real love!"

And oh! is there not a truth also in our fictions of the Unseen World? Are there not yet bright lingerers by the forest and the stream? Do the moon and the soft stars look out on no delicate and winged forms bathing in their light? Are the fairies and the invisible hosts but the children of our dreams, and not their inspiration? Is that all a delusion which speaks from the golden page? And is the world only given to harsh and anxious travellers that walk to and fro in pursuit of no gentle shadows? Are the chimeras of the passions the sole spirits of the universe? No! while my remembrance treasures in its deepest cell the image of one no more, — one who was "not of the earth, earthy;" one in whom

love was the essence of thoughts divine; one whose shape and mould, whose heart and genius, would, had Poesy never before dreamed it, have called forth the first notion of spirits resembling mortals, but not of them,—no, Gertrude! while I remember you, the faith, the trust in brighter shapes and fairer natures than the world knows of, comes clinging to my heart; and still will I think that Fairies might have watched over your sleep and Spirits have ministered to your dreams.

CHAPTER III.

FEELINGS.

GERTRUDE and her companions proceeded by slow and, to her, delightful stages to Rotterdam. Trevelyán sat by her side, and her hand was ever in his; and when her delicate frame became sensible of fatigue, her head drooped on his shoulder as its natural resting-place. Her father was a man who had lived long enough to have encountered many reverses of fortune, and they had left him, as I am apt to believe long adversity usually *does* leave its prey, somewhat chilled and somewhat hardened to affection; passive and quiet of hope, resigned to the worst as to the common order of events, and expecting little from the best, as an unlooked-for incident in the regularity of human afflictions. He was insensible of his daughter's danger, for he was not one whom the fear of love endows with prophetic vision; and he lived tranquilly in the present, without asking what new misfortune awaited him in the future. Yet he loved his child, his only child, with whatever of affection was left him by the many shocks his heart had received; and in her approaching connection with one rich and noble as Trevelyán, he felt even something bordering upon pleasure. Lapped in the apathetic indifference of his nature, he leaned back in the carriage, enjoying the bright weather that attended their journey, and sensible — for he

was one of fine and cultivated taste — of whatever beauties of nature or remains of art varied their course. A companion of this sort was the most agreeable that two persons never needing a third could desire; he left them undisturbed to the intoxication of their mutual presence; he marked not the interchange of glances; he listened not to the whisper, the low delicious whisper, with which the heart speaks its sympathy to heart. He broke not that charmed silence which falls over us when the thoughts are full, and words leave nothing to explain; that repose of feeling; that certainty that we are understood without the effort of words, which makes the real luxury of intercourse and the true enchantment of travel. What a memory hours like these bequeath, after we have settled down into the calm occupation of common life! How beautiful, through the vista of years, seems that brief moonlight track upon the waters of our youth!

And Trevelyhan's nature, which, as I have said before, was naturally hard and stern, which was hot, irritable, ambitious, and prematurely tinctured with the policy and lessons of the world, seemed utterly changed by the peculiarities of his love. Every hour, every moment was full of incident to him; every look of Gertrude's was entered in the tablets of his heart; so that his love knew no languor, it required no change: he was absorbed in it, — *it was himself!* And he was soft, and watchful as the step of a mother by the couch of her sick child; the lion within him was tamed by indomitable love; the sadness, the presentiment, that was mixed with all his passion for Gertrude, filled him too with that poetry of feeling which is the result of thoughts weighing upon us, and not to be expressed by ordinary language. In this part of their journey, as I find by the date, were the following lines written; they are to be judged as the lines of one in whom emotion and truth were the only inspiration: —

I.

As leaves left darkling in the flush of day,
When glints the glad sun checkering o'er the tree,
I see the green earth brightening in the ray,
Which only casts a shadow upon me!

II.

What are the beams, the flowers, the glory, all
 Life's glow and gloss, the music and the bloom,
 When every sun but speeds the Eternal Pall,
 And Time is Death that dallies with the Tomb ?

III.

And yet — oh yet, so young, so pure ! — the while
 Fresh laugh the rose-hues round youth's morning sky,
 That voice, those eyes, the deep love of that smile,
 Are they not soul — *all* soul — and *can* they die ?

IV.

Are there the words " NO MORE " for thoughts like ours ?
 Must the bark sink upon so soft a wave ?
 Hath the short summer of thy life no flowers
 But those which bloom above thine early grave ?

V.

O God ! and what is life, that I should live ?
 (Hath not the world enow of common clay ?)
 And she — the Rose — whose life a soul could give
 To the void desert, sigh its sweets away ?

VI.

And I that love thee thus, to whom the air,
 Blest by thy breath, makes heaven where'er it be,
 Watch thy cheek wane, and smile away despair,
 Lest it should dim one hour yet left to Thee.

VII

Still let me conquer self ; oh, still conceal
 By the smooth brow the snake that coils below ;
 Break, break my heart ! it comforts yet to feel
 That *she* dreams on, unwakened by my woe !

VIII.

Hushed, where the Star's soft angel loves to keep
 Watch o'er their tide, the morning waters roll ;
 So glides my spirit, — darkness in the deep,
 But o'er the wave the presence of thy soul !

Gertrude had not as yet the presentiments that filled the soul of Trevlyan. She thought too little of herself to know her danger, and those hours to her were hours of unmingled sweetness. Sometimes, indeed, the exhaustion of her disease tinged her spirits with a vague sadness, an abstraction came over her, and a languor she vainly struggled against. These fits of dejection and gloom touched Trevlyan to the quick; his eye never ceased to watch them, nor his heart to soothe. Often when he marked them, he sought to attract her attention from what he fancied, though erringly, a sympathy with his own forebodings, and to lead her young and romantic imagination through the temporary beguilements of fiction; for Gertrude was yet in the first bloom of youth, and all the dews of beautiful childhood sparkled freshly from the virgin blossoms of her mind. And Trevlyan, who had passed some of his early years among the students of Leipsic, and was deeply versed in the various world of legendary lore, ransacked his memory for such tales as seemed to him most likely to win her interest; and often with false smiles entered into the playful tale, or oftener, with more faithful interest, into the graver legend of trials that warned yet beguiled them from their own. Of such tales I have selected but a few; I know not that they are the least unworthy of repetition,—they are those which many recollections induce me to repeat the most willingly. Gertrude loved these stories, for she had not yet lost, by the coldness of the world, one leaf from that soft and wild romance which belonged to her beautiful mind; and, more than all, she loved the sound of a voice which every day became more and more musical to her ear. “Shall I tell you,” said Trevlyan, one morning, as he observed her gloomier mood stealing over the face of Gertrude,—“shall I tell you, ere yet we pass into the dull land of Holland, a story of Malines, whose spires we shall shortly see?” Gertrude’s face brightened at once, and as she leaned back in the carriage as it whirled rapidly along, and fixed her deep blue eyes on Trevlyan, he began the following tale.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAID OF MALINES.

It was noonday in the town of Malines, or Mechlin, as the English usually term it; the Sabbath bell had summoned the inhabitants to divine worship; and the crowd that had loitered round the Church of St. Rembauld had gradually emptied itself within the spacious aisles of the sacred edifice.

A young man was standing in the street, with his eyes bent on the ground, and apparently listening for some sound; for without raising his looks from the rude pavement, he turned to every corner of it with an intent and anxious expression of countenance. He held in one hand a staff, in the other a long slender cord, the end of which trailed on the ground; every now and then he called, with a plaintive voice, "Fido, Fido, come back! Why hast thou deserted me?" Fido returned not; the dog, wearied of confinement, had slipped from the string, and was at play with his kind in a distant quarter of the town, leaving the blind man to seek his way as he might to his solitary inn.

By and by a light step passed through the street, and the young stranger's face brightened.

"Pardon me," said he, turning to the spot where his quick ear had caught the sound, "and direct me, if you are not much pressed for a few moments' time, to the hotel 'Mortier d'Or.'"

It was a young woman, whose dress betokened that she belonged to the middling class of life, whom he thus addressed. "It is some distance hence, sir," said she; "but if you continue your way straight on for about a hundred yards, and then take the second turn to your right hand —"

"Alas!" interrupted the stranger, with a melancholy smile, "your direction will avail me little; my dog has deserted me, and I am blind!"

There was something in these words, and in the stranger's voice, which went irresistibly to the heart of the young woman. "Pray forgive me," she said, almost with tears in her eyes, "I did not perceive your —" misfortune, she was about to say, but she checked herself with an instinctive delicacy. "Lean upon me, I will conduct you to the door; nay, sir," observing that he hesitated, "I have time enough to spare, I assure you."

The stranger placed his hand on the young woman's arm; and though Lucille was naturally so bashful that even her mother would laughingly reproach her for the excess of a maiden virtue, she felt not the least pang of shame, as she found herself thus suddenly walking through the streets of Malines along with a young stranger, whose dress and air betokened him of rank superior to her own.

"Your voice is very gentle," said he, after a pause; "and that," he added, with a slight sigh, "is the only criterion by which I know the young and the beautiful!" Lucille now blushed, and with a slight mixture of pain in the blush, for she knew well that to beauty she had no pretension. "Are you a native of this town?" continued he.

"Yes, sir; my father holds a small office in the customs, and my mother and I eke out his salary by making lace. We are called poor, but we do not feel it, sir."

"You are fortunate! there is no wealth like the heart's wealth,—content," answered the blind man, mournfully.

"And, monsieur," said Lucille, feeling angry with herself that she had awakened a natural envy in the stranger's mind, and anxious to change the subject — "and, monsieur, has he been long at Malines?"

"But yesterday. I am passing through the Low Countries on a tour; perhaps you smile at the tour of a blind man, but it is wearisome even to the blind to rest always in the same place. I thought during church-time, when the streets were empty, that I might, by the help of my dog, enjoy safely at least the air, if not the sight of the town; but there are some persons, methinks, who cannot have even a dog for a friend!"

The blind man spoke bitterly,—the desertion of his dog

had touched him to the core. Lucille wiped her eyes. "And does Monsieur travel then alone?" said she; and looking at his face more attentively than she had yet ventured to do, she saw that he was scarcely above two-and-twenty. "His father, and his *mother*," she added, with an emphasis on the last word, "are they not with him?"

"I am an orphan!" answered the stranger; "and I have neither brother nor sister."

The desolate condition of the blind man quite melted Lucille; never had she been so strongly affected. She felt a strange flutter at the heart, a secret and earnest sympathy, that attracted her at once towards him. She wished that Heaven had suffered her to be his sister!

The contrast between the youth and the form of the stranger, and the affliction which took hope from the one and activity from the other, increased the compassion he excited. His features were remarkably regular, and had a certain nobleness in their outline; and his frame was gracefully and firmly knit, though he moved cautiously and with no cheerful step.

They had now passed into a narrow street leading towards the hotel, when they heard behind them the clatter of hoofs; and Lucille, looking hastily back, saw that a troop of the Belgian horse was passing through the town.

She drew her charge close by the wall, and trembling with fear for him, she stationed herself by his side. The troop passed at a full trot through the street; and at the sound of their clanging arms, and the ringing hoofs of their heavy chargers, Lucille might have seen, had she looked at the blind man's face, that its sad features kindled with enthusiasm, and his head was raised proudly from its wonted and melancholy bend. "Thank Heaven!" she said, as the troop had nearly passed them, "the danger is over!" Not so. One of the last two soldiers who rode abreast was unfortunately mounted on a young and unmanageable horse. The rider's oaths and digging spur only increased the fire and impatience of the charger; it plunged from side to side of the narrow street.

"Look to yourselves!" cried the horseman, as he was borne on to the place where Lucille and the stranger stood against the wall. "Are ye mad? Why do you not run?"

"For Heaven's sake, for mercy's sake, he is blind!" cried Lucille, clinging to the stranger's side.

"Save yourself, my kind guide!" said the stranger. But Lucille dreamed not of such desertion. The trooper wrested the horse's head from the spot where they stood; with a snort, as it felt the spur, the enraged animal lashed out with its hind-legs; and Lucille, unable to save *both*, threw herself before the blind man, and received the shock directed against him; her slight and delicate arm fell broken by her side, the horseman was borne onward. "Thank God, *you* are saved!" was poor Lucille's exclamation; and she fell, overcome with pain and terror, into the arms which the stranger mechanically opened to receive her.

"My guide! my friend!" cried he, "you are hurt, you —"

"No, sir," interrupted Lucille, faintly, "I am better, I am well. *This* arm, if you please,— we are not far from your hotel now."

But the stranger's ear, tutored to every inflection of voice, told him at once of the pain she suffered. He drew from her by degrees the confession of the injury she had sustained; but the generous girl did not tell him it had been incurred solely in his protection. He now insisted on reversing their duties, and accompanying *her* to her home; and Lucille, almost fainting with pain, and hardly able to move, was forced to consent. But a few steps down the next turning stood the humble mansion of her father. They reached it; and Lucille scarcely crossed the threshold, before she sank down, and for some minutes was insensible to pain. It was left to the stranger to explain, and to beseech them immediately to send for a surgeon, "the most skilful, the most practised in the town," said he. "See, I am rich, and this is the least I can do to atone to your generous daughter, for not forsaking even a stranger in peril."

He held out his purse as he spoke, but the father refused the offer; and it saved the blind man some shame, that he

could not see the blush of honest resentment with which so poor a species of remuneration was put aside.

The young man stayed till the surgeon arrived, till the arm was set; nor did he depart until he had obtained a promise from the mother that he should learn the next morning how the sufferer had passed the night.

The next morning, indeed, he had intended to quit a town that offers but little temptation to the traveller; but he tarried day after day, until Lucille herself accompanied her mother, to assure him of her recovery.

You know, at least I do, dearest Gertrude, that there is such a thing as love at the first meeting,—a secret, an unaccountable affinity between persons (strangers before) which draws them irresistibly together,—as if there were truth in Plato's beautiful fantasy, that our souls were a portion of the stars, and that spirits, thus attracted to each other, have drawn their original light from the same orb, and yearn for a renewal of their former union. Yet without recurring to such fanciful solutions of a daily mystery, it was but natural that one in the forlorn and desolate condition of Eugene St. Amand should have felt a certain tenderness for a person who had so generously suffered for his sake.

The darkness to which he was condemned did not shut from his mind's eye the haunting images of Ideal beauty; rather, on the contrary, in his perpetual and unoccupied solitude, he fed the reveries of an imagination naturally warm, and a heart eager for sympathy and commune.

He had said rightly that his only test of beauty was in the melody of voice; and never had a softer or more thrilling tone than that of the young maiden touched upon his ear. Her exclamation, so beautifully denying self, so devoted in its charity, "Thank God, *you* are saved!" uttered too in the moment of her own suffering, rang constantly upon his soul, and he yielded, without precisely defining their nature, to vague and delicious sentiments, that his youth had never awakened to till then. And Lucille—the very accident that had happened to her on his behalf only deepened the interest she had already conceived for one who, in the first flash of youth, was

thus cut off from the glad objects of life, and left to a night of years desolate and alone. There is, to your beautiful and kindly sex, a natural inclination to *protect*. This makes them the angels of sickness, the comforters of age, the fosterers of childhood; and this feeling, in Lucille peculiarly developed, had already inexpressibly linked her compassionate nature to the lot of the unfortunate traveller. With ardent affections, and with thoughts beyond her station and her years, she was not without that modest vanity which made her painfully susceptible to her own deficiencies in beauty. Instinctively conscious of how deeply she herself could love, she believed it impossible that she could ever be so loved in return. The stranger, so superior in her eyes to all she had yet seen, was the first who had ever addressed her in that voice which by tones, not words, speaks that admiration most dear to a woman's heart. To *him* she was beautiful, and her lovely mind spoke out, undimmed by the imperfections of her face. Not, indeed, that Lucille was wholly without personal attraction; her light step and graceful form were elastic with the freshness of youth, and her mouth and smile had so gentle and tender an expression, that there were moments when it would not have been the blind only who would have mistaken her to be beautiful. Her early childhood had indeed given the promise of attractions, which the smallpox, that then fearful malady, had inexorably marred. It had not only seared the smooth skin and brilliant hues, but utterly changed even the character of the features. It so happened that Lucille's family were celebrated for beauty, and vain of that celebrity; and so bitterly had her parents deplored the effects of the cruel malady, that poor Lucille had been early taught to consider them far more grievous than they really were, and to exaggerate the advantages of that beauty, the loss of which was considered by her parents so heavy a misfortune. Lucille, too, had a cousin named Julie, who was the wonder of all Malines for her personal perfections; and as the cousins were much together, the contrast was too striking not to occasion frequent mortification to Lucille. But every misfortune has something of a counterpoise; and the consciousness of

personal inferiority had meekened, without souring, her temper, had given gentleness to a spirit that otherwise might have been too high, and humility to a mind that was naturally strong, impassioned, and energetic.

And yet Lucille had long conquered the one disadvantage she most dreaded in the want of beauty. Lucille was never known but to be loved. Wherever came her presence, her bright and soft mind diffused a certain inexpressible charm; and where she was not, a something was absent from the scene which not even Julie's beauty could replace.

"I propose," said St. Amand to Madame le Tisseur, Lucille's mother, as he sat in her little salon,—for he had already contracted that acquaintance with the family which permitted him to be led to their house, to return the visits Madame le Tisseur had made him, and his dog, once more returned a penitent to his master, always conducted his steps to the humble abode, and stopped instinctively at the door,—*"I propose,"* said St. Amand, after a pause, and with some embarrassment, *"to stay a little while longer at Malines; the air agrees with me, and I like the quiet of the place; but you are aware, madam, that at a hotel among strangers, I feel my situation somewhat cheerless. I have been thinking"*—St. Amand paused again—*"I have been thinking that if I could persuade some agreeable family to receive me as a lodger, I would fix myself here for some weeks. I am easily pleased."*

"Doubtless there are many in Malines who would be too happy to receive such a lodger."

"Will you receive me?" asked St. Amand, abruptly. "It was of *your* family I thought."

"Of us? Monsieur is too flattering. But we have scarcely a room good enough for you."

"What difference between one room and another can there be to me? That is the best apartment to my choice in which the human voice sounds most kindly."

The arrangement was made, and St. Amand came now to reside beneath the same roof as Lucille. And was she not happy that *he* wanted so constant an attendance; was she not happy that she was ever of use? St. Amand was passion-

ately fond of music; he played himself with a skill that was only surpassed by the exquisite melody of his voice; and was not Lucille happy when she sat mute and listening to such sounds as in Malines were never heard before? Was she not happy in gazing on a face to whose melancholy aspect her voice instantly summoned the smile? Was she not happy when the music ceased, and St. Amand called "Lucille"? Did not her own name uttered by that voice seem to her even sweeter than the music? Was she not happy when they walked out in the still evenings of summer, and her arm thrilled beneath the light touch of one to whom she was so necessary? Was she not proud in her happiness, and was there not something like worship in the gratitude she felt to him for raising her humble spirit to the luxury of feeling herself beloved?

St. Amand's parents were French. They had resided in the neighbourhood of Amiens, where they had inherited a competent property, to which he had succeeded about two years previous to the date of my story.

He had been blind from the age of three years. "I know not," said he, as he related these particulars to Lucille one evening when they were alone,— "I know not what the earth may be like, or the heaven, or the rivers whose voice at least I can hear, for I have no recollection beyond that of a confused but delicious blending of a thousand glorious colours,— a bright and quick sense of joy, A VISIBLE MUSIC. But it is only since my childhood closed that I have mourned, as I now unceasingly mourn, for the light of day. My boyhood passed in a quiet cheerfulness; the least trifle then could please and occupy the vacancies of my mind; but it was as I took delight in being read to, as I listened to the vivid descriptions of Poetry, as I glowed at the recital of great deeds, as I was made acquainted by books with the energy, the action, the heat, the fervour, the pomp, the enthusiasm of life, that I gradually opened to the sense of all I was forever denied. I felt that I existed, not lived; and that, in the midst of the Universal Liberty, I was sentenced to a prison, from whose blank walls there was no escape. Still, however, while my parents

lived, I had something of consolation; at least I was not alone. They died, and a sudden and dread solitude, a vast and empty dreariness, settled upon my dungeon. One old servant only, who had attended me from my childhood, who had known me in my short privilege of light, by whose recollections my mind could grope back its way through the dark and narrow passages of memory to faint glimpses of the sun, was all that remained to me of human sympathies. It did not suffice, however, to content me with a home where my father and my mother's kind voice were *not*. A restless impatience, an anxiety to move, possessed me, and I set out from my home, journeying whither I cared not, so that at least I could change an air that weighed upon me like a palpable burden. I took only this old attendant as my companion; he too died three months since at Bruxelles, worn out with years. Alas! I had forgotten that he was old, for I saw not his progress to decay; and now, save my faithless dog, I was utterly alone, till I came hither and found *thee*."

Lucille stooped down to caress the dog; she blessed the desertion that had led him to a friend who never could desert.

But however much, and however gratefully, St. Amand loved Lucille, her power availed not to chase the melancholy from his brow, and to reconcile him to his forlorn condition.

"Ah, would that I could see thee! would that I could look upon a face that my heart vainly endeavours to delineate!"

"If thou couldst," sighed Lucille, "thou wouldst cease to love me."

"Impossible!" cried St. Amand, passionately. "However the world may find thee, *thou* wouldst become my standard of beauty; and I should judge not of thee by others, but of others by thee."

He loved to hear Lucille read to him, and mostly he loved the descriptions of war, of travel, of wild adventure, and yet they occasioned him the most pain. Often she paused from the page as she heard him sigh, and felt that she would even have renounced the bliss of being loved by him, if she could

have restored to him that blessing, the desire for which haunted him as a spectre.

Lucille's family were Catholic, and, like most in their station, they possessed the superstitions, as well as the devotion of the faith. Sometimes they amused themselves of an evening by the various legends and imaginary miracles of their calendar; and once, as they were thus conversing with two or three of their neighbours, "The Tomb of the Three Kings of Cologne" became the main topic of their wondering recitals. However strong was the sense of Lucille, she was, as you will readily conceive, naturally influenced by the belief of those with whom she had been brought up from her cradle, and she listened to tale after tale of the miracles wrought at the consecrated tomb, as earnestly and undoubtingly as the rest.

And the Kings of the East were no ordinary saints; to the relics of the Three Magi, who followed the Star of Bethlehem, and were the first potentates of the earth who adored its Saviour, well might the pious Catholic suppose that a peculiar power and a healing sanctity would belong. Each of the circle (St. Amand, who had been more than usually silent, and even gloomy during the day, had retired to his own apartment, for there were some moments when, in the sadness of his thoughts, he sought that solitude which he so impatiently fled from at others) — each of the circle had some story to relate equally veracious and indisputable, of an infirmity cured, or a prayer accorded, or a sin atoned for at the foot of the holy tomb. One story peculiarly affected Lucille; the narrator, a venerable old man with gray locks, solemnly declared himself a witness of its truth.

A woman at Anvers had given birth to a son, the offspring of an illicit connection, who came into the world deaf and dumb. The unfortunate mother believed the calamity a punishment for her own sin. "Ah, would," said she, "that the affliction had fallen only upon me! Wretch that I am, my innocent child is punished for my offence!" This idea haunted her night and day; she pined and could not be comforted. As the child grew up, and wound himself more and more round her heart, his caresses added new pangs to her

remorse; and at length (continued the narrator) hearing perpetually of the holy fame of the Tomb of Cologne, she resolved upon a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine. "God is merciful," said she; "and He who called Magdalene his sister may take the mother's curse from the child." She then went to Cologne; she poured her tears, her penitence, and her prayers at the sacred tomb. When she returned to her native town, what was her dismay as she approached her cottage to behold it a heap of ruins! Its blackened rafters and yawning casements betokened the ravages of fire. The poor woman sank upon the ground utterly overpowered. Had her son perished? At that moment she heard the cry of a child's voice, and, lo! her child rushed to her arms, and called her "mother!"

He had been saved from the fire, which had broken out seven days before; but in the terror he had suffered, the string that tied his tongue had been loosened; he had uttered articulate sounds of distress; the curse was removed, and one word at least the kind neighbours had already taught him to welcome his mother's return. What cared she now that her substance was gone, that her roof was ashes? She bowed in grateful submission to so mild a stroke; her prayer had been heard, and the sin of the mother was visited no longer on the child.

I have said, dear Gertrude, that this story made a deep impression upon Lucille. A misfortune so nearly akin to that of St. Amand removed by the prayer of another filled her with devoted thoughts and a beautiful hope. "Is not the tomb still standing?" thought she. "Is not God still in heaven?—He who heard the guilty, may He not hear the guiltless? Is He not the God of love? Are not the affections the offerings that please Him best? And what though the child's mediator was his mother, can even a mother love her child more tenderly than I love Eugene? But if, Lucille, thy prayer be granted, if he recover his sight, *thy* charm is gone, he will love thee no longer. No matter! be it so,—I shall at least have made him happy!"

Such were the thoughts that filled the mind of Lucille; she

cherished them till they settled into resolution, and she secretly vowed to perform her pilgrimage of love. She told neither St. Amand nor her parents of her intention; she knew the obstacles such an announcement would create. Fortunately she had an aunt settled at Bruxelles, to whom she had been accustomed once in every year to pay a month's visit, and at that time she generally took with her the work of a twelvemonths' industry, which found a readier sale at Bruxelles than at Malines. Lucille and St. Amand were already betrothed; their wedding was shortly to take place; and the custom of the country leading parents, however poor, to nourish the honourable ambition of giving some dowry with their daughters, Lucille found it easy to hide the object of her departure, under the pretence of taking the lace to Bruxelles, which had been the year's labour of her mother and herself,—it would sell for sufficient, at least, to defray the preparations for the wedding.

"Thou art ever right, child," said Madame le Tisseur; "the richer St. Amand is, why, the less oughtest thou to go a beggar to his house."

In fact, the honest ambition of the good people was excited; their pride had been hurt by the envy of the town and the current congratulations on so advantageous a marriage; and they employed themselves in counting up the fortune they should be able to give to their only child, and flattering their pardonable vanity with the notion that there would be no such great disproportion in the connection after all. They were right, but not in their own view of the estimate; the wealth that Lucille brought was what fate could not lessen, reverse could not reach; the ungracious seasons could not blight its sweet harvest; imprudence could not dissipate, fraud could not steal, one grain from its abundant coffers! Like the purse in the Fairy Tale, its use was hourly, its treasure inexhaustible.

St. Amand alone was not to be won to her departure; he chafed at the notion of a dowry; he was not appeased even by Lucille's representation that it was only to gratify and not to impoverish her parents. "And *thou*, too, canst leave

me!" he said, in that plaintive voice which had made his first charm to Lucille's heart. "It is a double blindness!"

"But for a few days; a fortnight at most, dearest Eugene."

"A fortnight! you do not reckon time as the blind do," said St. Amand, bitterly.

"But listen, listen, dear Eugene," said Lucille, weeping.

The sound of her sobs restored him to a sense of his ingratitude. Alas, he knew not how much he had to be grateful for! He held out his arms to her. "Forgive me," said he. "Those who can see Nature know not how terrible it is to be alone."

"But my mother will not leave you."

"She is not you!"

"And Julie," said Lucille, hesitatingly.

"What is Julie to me?"

"Ah, you are the only one, save my parents, who could think of me in her presence."

"And why, Lucille?"

"Why! She is more beautiful than a dream."

"Say not so. Would I could see, that I might prove to the world how much more beautiful thou art! There is no music in *her* voice."

The evening before Lucille departed she sat up late with St. Amand and her mother. They conversed on the future; they made plans; in the wide sterility of the world they laid out the garden of household love, and filled it with flowers, forgetful of the wind that scatters and the frost that kills. And when, leaning on Lucille's arm, St. Amand sought his chamber, and they parted at his door, which closed upon her, she fell down on her knees at the threshold, and poured out the fulness of her heart in a prayer for his safety and the fulfilment of her timid hope.

At daybreak she was consigned to the conveyance that performed the short journey from Malines to Bruxelles. When she entered the town, instead of seeking her aunt, she rested at an *auberge* in the suburbs, and confiding her little basket of lace to the care of its hostess, she set out alone, and on foot, upon the errand of her heart's lovely superstition. And

erring though it was, her faith redeemed its weakness, her affection made it even sacred; and well may we believe that the Eye which reads all secrets scarce looked reprovingly on that fanaticism whose only infirmity was love.

So fearful was she lest, by rendering the task too easy, she might impair the effect, that she scarcely allowed herself rest or food. Sometimes, in the heat of noon, she wandered a little from the roadside, and under the spreading lime-trees surrendered her mind to its sweet and bitter thoughts; but ever the restlessness of her enterprise urged her on, and faint, weary, and with bleeding feet, she started up and continued her way. At length she reached the ancient city, where a holier age has scarce worn from the habits and aspects of men the Roman trace. She prostrated herself at the tomb of the Magi; she proffered her ardent but humble prayer to Him before whose Son those fleshless heads (yet to faith at least preserved) had, eighteen centuries ago, bowed in adoration. Twice every day, for a whole week, she sought the same spot, and poured forth the same prayer. The last day an old priest, who, hovering in the church, had observed her constantly at devotion, with that fatherly interest which the better ministers of the Catholic sect (that sect which has covered the earth with the mansions of charity) feel for the unhappy, approached her as she was retiring with moist and downcast eyes, and saluting her, assumed the privilege of his order to inquire if there was aught in which his advice or aid could serve. There was something in the venerable air of the old man which encouraged Lucille; she opened her heart to him; she told him all. The good priest was much moved by her simplicity and earnestness. He questioned her minutely as to the peculiar species of blindness with which St. Amand was afflicted; and after musing a little while, he said, "Daughter, God is great and merciful; we must trust in His power, but we must not forget that He mostly works by mortal agents. As you pass through Louvain in your way home, fail not to see there a certain physician, named Le Kain. He is celebrated through Flanders for the cures he has wrought among the blind, and his advice is sought by all classes from

far and near. He lives hard by the Hôtel de Ville, but any one will inform you of his residence. Stay, my child, you shall take him a note from me; he is a benevolent and kindly man, and you shall tell him exactly the same story (and with the same voice) you have told to me."

So saying the priest made Lucille accompany him to his home, and forcing her to refresh herself less sparingly than she had yet done since she had left Malines, he gave her his blessing, and a letter to Le Kain, which he rightly judged would insure her a patient hearing from the physician. Well known among all men of science was the name of the priest, and a word of recommendation from him went further, where virtue and wisdom were honoured, than the longest letter from the haughtiest sieur in Flanders.

With a patient and hopeful spirit, the young pilgrim turned her back on the Roman Cologne; and now about to rejoin St. Amand, she felt neither the heat of the sun nor the weariness of the road. It was one day at noon that she again passed through Louvain, and she soon found herself by the noble edifice of the Hôtel de Ville. Proud rose its spires against the sky, and the sun shone bright on its rich tracery and Gothic casements; the broad open street was crowded with persons of all classes, and it was with some modest alarm that Lucille lowered her veil and mingled with the throng. It was easy, as the priest had said, to find the house of Le Kain; she bade the servant take the priest's letter to his master, and she was not long kept waiting before she was admitted to the physician's presence. He was a spare, tall man, with a bald front, and a calm and friendly countenance. He was not less touched than the priest had been by the manner in which she narrated her story, described the affliction of her betrothed, and the hope that had inspired the pilgrimage she had just made.

"Well," said he, encouragingly, "we must see our patient. You can bring him hither to me."

"Ah, sir, I had hoped —" Lucille stopped suddenly.

"What, my young friend?"

"That I might have had the triumph of bringing you to

Malines. I know, sir, what you are about to say, and I know, sir, your time must be very valuable; but I am not so poor as I seem, and Eugene, that is, M. St. Amand, is very rich, and — and I have at Bruxelles what I am sure is a large sum; it was to have provided for the wedding, but it is most heartily at your service, sir."

Le Kain smiled; he was one of those men who love to read the human heart when its leaves are fair and undefiled; and, in the benevolence of science, he would have gone a longer journey than from Louvain to Malines to give sight to the blind, even had St. Amand been a beggar.

"Well, well," said he, "but you forget that M. St. Amand is not the only one in the world who wants me. I must look at my notebook, and see if I can be spared for a day or two."

So saying, he glanced at his memoranda. Everything smiled on Lucille; he had no engagements that his partner could not fulfil, for some days; he consented to accompany Lucille to Malines.

Meanwhile, cheerless and dull had passed the time to St. Amand. He was perpetually asking Madame le Tisseur what hour it was, — it was almost his only question. There seemed to him no sun in the heavens, no freshness in the air, and he even forbore his favourite music; the instrument had lost its sweetness since Lucille was not by to listen.

It was natural that the gossips of Malines should feel some envy at the marriage Lucille was about to make with one whose competence report had exaggerated into prodigal wealth, whose birth had been elevated from the respectable to the noble, and whose handsome person was clothed, by the interest excited by his misfortune, with the beauty of Antinous. Even that misfortune, which ought to have levelled all distinctions, was not sufficient to check the general envy; perhaps to some of the damsels of Malines blindness in a husband would not have seemed an unwelcome infirmity! But there was one in whom this envy rankled with a peculiar sting: it was the beautiful, the all-conquering Julie! That the humble, the neglected Lucille should be preferred to her; that Lucille,

whose existence was well-nigh forgot beside Julie's, should become thus suddenly of importance; that there should be one person in the world, and that person young, rich, handsome, to whom she was less than nothing, when weighed in the balance with Lucille, mortified to the quick a vanity that had never till then received a wound. "It is well," she would say with a bitter jest, "that Lucille's lover is blind. To be the one it is necessary to be the other!"

During Lucille's absence she had been constantly in Madame le Tisseur's house; indeed, Lucille had prayed her to be so. She had sought, with an industry that astonished herself, to supply Lucille's place; and among the strange contradictions of human nature, she had learned during her efforts to please, to love the object of those efforts,—as much at least as she was capable of loving.

She conceived a positive hatred to Lucille; she persisted in imagining that nothing but the accident of first acquaintance had deprived her of a conquest with which she persuaded herself her happiness had become connected. Had St. Amand never loved Lucille and proposed to Julie, his misfortune would have made her reject him, despite his wealth and his youth; but to be Lucille's lover, and a conquest to be won from Lucille, raised him instantly to an importance not his own. Safe, however, in his affliction, the arts and beauty of Julie fell harmless on the fidelity of St. Amand. Nay, he liked her less than ever, for it seemed an impertinence in any one to counterfeit the anxiety and watchfulness of Lucille.

"It is time, surely it is time, Madame le Tisseur, that Lucille should return? She might have sold all the lace in Malines by this time," said St. Amand, one day, peevishly.

"Patience, my dear friend, patience; perhaps she may return to-morrow."

"To-morrow! let me see, it is only six o'clock,—only six, you are sure?"

"Just five, dear Eugene. Shall I read to you? This is a new book from Paris; it has made a great noise," said Julie.

"You are very kind, but I will not trouble you."

"It is anything but trouble."

"In a word, then, I would rather not."

"Oh, that he could see!" thought Julie; "would I not punish him for this!"

"I hear carriage wheels; who can be passing this way? Surely it is the *voiturier* from Bruxelles," said St. Amand, starting up; "it is his day,—his hour, too. No, no, it is a lighter vehicle," and he sank down listlessly on his seat.

Nearer and nearer rolled the wheels; they turned the corner; they stopped at the lowly door; and, overcome, overjoyed, Lucille was clasped to the bosom of St. Amand.

"Stay," said she, blushing, as she recovered her self-possession, and turned to Le Kain; "pray pardon me, sir. Dear Eugene, I have brought with me one who, by God's blessing, may yet restore you to sight."

"We must not be sanguine, my child," said Le Kain; "anything is better than disappointment."

To close this part of my story, dear Gertrude, Le Kain examined St. Amand, and the result of the examination was a confident belief in the probability of a cure. St. Amand gladly consented to the experiment of an operation; it succeeded, the blind man saw! Oh, what were Lucille's feelings, what her emotion, what her joy, when she found the object of her pilgrimage, of her prayers, fulfilled! That joy was so intense that in the eternal alternations of human life she might have foretold from its excess how bitter the sorrows fated to ensue.

As soon as by degrees the patient's new sense became reconciled to the light, his first, his only demand was for Lucille. "No, let me not see her alone; let me see her in the midst of you all, that I may convince you that the heart never is mistaken in its instincts." With a fearful, a sinking presentiment, Lucille yielded to the request, to which the impetuous St. Amand would hear indeed no denial. The father, the mother, Julie, Lucille, Julie's younger sisters, assembled in the little parlour; the door opened, and St. Amand stood hesitating on the threshold. One look around sufficed to him; his face brightened, he uttered a cry of joy. "Lucille!

Lucille!" he exclaimed, "it is you, I know it, *you only!*" He sprang forward *and fell at the feet of Julie!*

Flushed, elated, triumphant, Julie bent upon him her sparkling eyes; *she* did not undeceive him.

"You are wrong, you mistake," said Madame le Tisseur, in confusion; "that is her cousin Julie,—this is your Lucille."

St. Amand rose, turned, saw Lucille, and at that moment she wished herself in her grave. Surprise, mortification, disappointment, almost dismay, were depicted in his gaze. He had been haunting his prison-house with dreams, and now, set free, he felt how unlike they were to the truth. Too new to observation to read the woe, the despair, the lapse and shrinking of the whole frame, that his look occasioned Lucille, he yet felt, when the first shock of his surprise was over, that it was not thus he should thank her who had restored him to sight. He hastened to redeem his error—ah! how could it be redeemed?

From that hour all Lucille's happiness was at an end; her fairy palace was shattered in the dust; the magician's wand was broken up; the Ariel was given to the winds; and the bright enchantment no longer distinguished the land she lived in from the rest of the barren world. It is true that St. Amand's words were kind; it is true that he remembered with the deepest gratitude all she had done in his behalf; it is true that he forced himself again and again to say, "She is my betrothed, my benefactress!" and he cursed himself to think that the feelings he had entertained for her were fled. Where was the passion of his words; where the ardour of his tone; where that play and light of countenance which her step, *her* voice, could formerly call forth? When they were alone he was embarrassed and constrained, and almost cold; his hand no longer sought hers, his soul no longer missed her if she was absent a moment from his side. When in their household circle he seemed visibly more at ease; but did his eyes fasten upon her who had opened them to the day; did they not wander at every interval with a too eloquent admiration to the blushing and radiant face of the exulting Julie? This was not, you will believe, suddenly perceptible in one

day or one week, but every day it was perceptible more and more. Yet still — bewitched, ensnared, as St. Amand was — he never perhaps would have been guilty of an infidelity that he strove with the keenest remorse to wrestle against, had it not been for the fatal contrast, at the first moment of his gushing enthusiasm, which Julie had presented to Lucille; but for that he would have formed no previous idea of real and living beauty to aid the disappointment of his imaginings and his dreams. He would have seen Lucille young and graceful, and with eyes beaming affection, contrasted only by the wrinkled countenance and bended frame of her parents, and she would have completed her conquest over him before he had discovered that she was less beautiful than others; nay, more, — that infidelity never could have lasted above the first few days, if the vain and heartless object of it had not exerted every art, all the power and witchery of her beauty, to cement and continue it. The unfortunate Lucille — so susceptible to the slightest change in those she loved, so diffident of herself, so proud too in that diffidence — no longer necessary, no longer missed, no longer loved, could not bear to endure the galling comparison between the past and the present. She fled uncomplainingly to her chamber to indulge her tears, and thus, unhappily, absent as her father generally was during the day, and busied as her mother was either at work or in household matters, she left Julie a thousand opportunities to complete the power she had begun to wield over — no, not the heart! — the *senses* of St. Amand! Yet, still not suspecting, in the open generosity of her mind, the whole extent of her affliction, poor Lucille buoyed herself at times with the hope that when once married, when, once in that intimacy of friendship, the unspeakable love she felt for him could disclose itself with less restraint than at present, — she would perhaps regain a heart which had been so devotedly hers, that she could not think that without a fault it was irrevocably gone: on that hope she anchored all the little happiness that remained to her. And still St. Amand pressed their marriage, but in what different tones! In fact, he wished to preclude from himself the possibility of a deeper ingratitude

than that which he had incurred already. He vainly thought that the broken reed of love might be bound up and strengthened by the ties of duty; and at least he was anxious that his hand, his fortune, his esteem, his gratitude, should give to Lucille the only recompense it was now in his power to bestow. Meanwhile, left alone so often with Julie, and Julie bent on achieving the last triumph over his heart, St. Amand was gradually preparing a far different reward, a far different return, for her to whom he owed so incalculable a debt.

There was a garden, behind the house, in which there was a small arbour, where often in the summer evenings Eugene and Lucille had sat together,—hours never to return! One day she heard from her own chamber, where she sat mourning, the sound of St. Amand's flute swelling gently from that beloved and consecrated bower. She wept as she heard it, and the memories that the music bore softening and endearing his image, she began to reproach herself that she had yielded so often to the impulse of her wounded feelings; that chilled by *his* coldness, she had left him so often to himself, and had not sufficiently dared to tell him of that affection which, in her modest self-depreciation, constituted her only pretension to his love. "Perhaps he is alone now," she thought; "the air too is one which he knows that I love:" and with her heart in her step, she stole from the house and sought the arbour. She had scarce turned from her chamber when the flute ceased; as she neared the arbour she heard voices,—Julie's voice in grief, St. Amand's in consolation. A dread foreboding seized her; her feet clung rooted to the earth.

"Yes, marry her, forget me," said Julie; "in a few days you will be another's, and I—I—forgive me, Eugene, forgive me that I have disturbed your happiness. I am punished sufficiently; my heart will break, but it will break in loving you." Sobs choked Julie's voice.

"Oh, speak not thus," said St. Amand. "I, I only am to blame,—I, false to both, to both ungrateful. Oh, from the hour that these eyes opened upon you I drank in a new life; the sun itself to me was less wonderful than your beauty.

But — but — let me forget that hour. What do I not owe to Lucille? I shall be wretched,— I shall deserve to be so; for shall I not think, Julie, that I have embittered your life with our ill-fated love? But all that I can give — my hand, my home, my plighted faith — must be hers. Nay, Julie, nay — why that look? Could I act otherwise? Can I dream otherwise? Whatever the sacrifice, *must* I not render it? Ah, what do I owe to Lucille, were it only for the thought that but for her I might never have seen thee!”

Lucille stayed to hear no more; with the same soft step as that which had borne her within hearing of these fatal words, she turned back once more to her desolate chamber.

That evening, as St. Amand was sitting alone in his apartment, he heard a gentle knock at the door. “Come in,” he said, and Lucille entered. He started in some confusion, and would have taken her hand, but she gently repulsed him. She took a seat opposite to him, and looking down, thus addressed him:—

“My dear Eugene, that is, Monsieur St. Amand, I have something on my mind that I think it better to speak at once; and if I do not exactly express what I would wish to say, you must not be offended with Lucille: it is not an easy matter to put into words what one feels deeply.” Colouring, and suspecting something of the truth, St. Amand would have broken in upon her here; but she with a gentle impatience motioned him to be silent, and continued:—

“You know that when you once loved me, I used to tell you that you would cease to do so could you see how underserving I was of your attachment. I did not deceive myself, Eugene; I always felt assured that such would be the case, that your love for me necessarily rested on your affliction. But for all that I never at least had a dream or a desire but for your happiness; and God knows, that if again, by walking barefooted, not to Cologne, but to Rome — to the end of the world — I could save you from a much less misfortune than that of blindness, I would cheerfully do it; yes, even though I might foretell all the while that, on my return, you would speak to me coldly, think of me lightly, and that the

penalty to me would — would be — what it has been!" Here Lucille wiped a few natural tears from her eyes. St. Amand, struck to the heart, covered his face with his hands, without the courage to interrupt her. Lucille continued: —

"That which I foresaw has come to pass; I am no longer to you what I once was, when you could clothe this poor form and this homely face with a beauty they did not possess. You would wed me still, it is true; but I am proud, Eugene, and cannot stoop to gratitude where I once had love. I am not so unjust as to blame you; the change was natural, was inevitable. I should have steeled myself more against it; but I am now resigned. We must part; you love Julie — that too is natural — and *she* loves you; ah! what also more in the probable course of events? Julie loves you, not yet, perhaps, so much as I did; but then she has not known you as I have, and she whose whole life has been triumph cannot feel the gratitude that I felt at fancying myself loved; but this will come — God grant it! Farewell, then, forever, dear Eugene; I leave you when you no longer want me; you are now independent of Lucille; wherever you go, a thousand hereafter can supply my place. Farewell!"

She rose, as she said this, to leave the room; but St. Amand seizing her hand, which she in vain endeavoured to withdraw from his clasp, poured forth incoherently, passionately, his reproaches on himself, his eloquent persuasion against her resolution.

"I confess," said he, "that I have been allured for a moment; I confess that Julie's beauty made me less sensible to your stronger, your holier, oh! far, far holier title to my love! But forgive me, dearest Lucille; already I return to you, to all I once felt for you; make me not curse the blessing of sight that I owe to you. You must not leave me; never can we two part. Try me, only try me, and if ever hereafter my heart wander from you, *then*, Lucille, leave me to my remorse!"

Even at that moment Lucille did not yield; she felt that his prayer was but the enthusiasm of the hour; she felt that there was a virtue in her pride,—that to leave him was a duty to herself. In vain he pleaded; in vain were his em-

braces, his prayers; in vain he reminded her of their plighted troth, of her aged parents, whose happiness had become wrapped in her union with him: "How,—even were it as you wrongly believe,—how, in honour to them, can I desert you, can I wed another?"

"Trust that, trust all, to me," answered Lucille; "your honour shall be my care, none shall blame *you*; only do not let your marriage with Julie be celebrated here before their eyes: that is all I ask, all they can expect. God bless you! do not fancy I shall be unhappy, for whatever happiness the world gives you, shall I not have contributed to bestow it?—and with that thought I am above compassion."

She glided from his arms, and left him to a solitude more bitter even than that of blindness. That very night Lucille sought her mother; to her she confided all. I pass over the reasons she urged, the arguments she overcame; she conquered rather than convinced, and leaving to Madame le Tisseur the painful task of breaking to her father her unalterable resolution, she quitted Malines the next morning, and with a heart too honest to be utterly without comfort, paid that visit to her aunt which had been so long deferred.

The pride of Lucille's parents prevented them from reproaching St. Amand. He could not bear, however, their cold and altered looks; he left their house; and though for several days he would not even see Julie, yet her beauty and her art gradually resumed their empire over him. They were married at Courtoi, and to the joy of the vain Julie departed to the gay metropolis of France. But, before their departure, before his marriage, St. Amand endeavoured to appease his conscience by obtaining for M. le Tisseur a much more lucrative and honourable office than that he now held. Rightly judging that Malines could no longer be a pleasant residence for them, and much less for Lucille, the duties of the post were to be fulfilled in another town; and knowing that M. le Tisseur's delicacy would revolt at receiving such a favour from his hands, he kept the nature of his negotiation a close secret, and suffered the honest citizen to believe that his own merits alone had entitled him to so unexpected a promotion.

Time went on. This quiet and simple history of humble affections took its date in a stormy epoch of the world,—the dawning Revolution of France. The family of Lucille had been little more than a year settled in their new residence when Dumouriez led his army into the Netherlands. But how meanwhile had that year passed for Lucille? I have said that her spirit was naturally high; that though so tender, she was not weak. Her very pilgrimage to Cologne alone, and at the timid age of seventeen, proved that there was a strength in her nature no less than a devotion in her love. The sacrifice she had made brought its own reward. She believed St. Amand was happy, and she would not give way to the selfishness of grief; she had still duties to perform; she could still comfort her parents and cheer their age; she could still be all the world to them: she felt this, and was consoled. Only once during the year had she heard of Julie: she had been seen by a mutual friend at Paris, gay, brilliant, courted, and admired; of St. Amand she heard nothing.

My tale, dear Gertrude, does not lead me through the harsh scenes of war. I do not tell you of the slaughter and the siege, and the blood that inundated those fair lands,—the great battlefield of Europe. The people of the Netherlands in general were with the cause of Dumouriez, but the town in which Le Tisseur dwelt offered some faint resistance to his arms. Le Tisseur himself, despite his age, girded on his sword; the town was carried, and the fierce and licentious troops of the conqueror poured, flushed with their easy victory, through its streets. Le Tisseur's house was filled with drunken and rude troopers; Lucille herself trembled in the fierce gripe of one of those dissolute soldiers, more bandit than soldier, whom the subtle Dumouriez had united to his army, and by whose blood he so often saved that of his nobler band. Her shrieks, her cries, were vain, when suddenly the troopers gave way. "The Captain! brave Captain!" was shouted forth; the insolent soldier, felled by a powerful arm, sank senseless at the feet of Lucille, and a glorious form, towering above its fellows,—even through its glittering garb, even in that dreadful hour, remembered at a glance by Lu-

cille,—stood at her side; her protector, her guardian! Thus once more she beheld St. Amand!

The house was cleared in an instant, the door barred. Shouts, groans, wild snatches of exulting song, the clang of arms, the tramp of horses, the hurrying footsteps, the deep music sounded loud, and blended terribly without. Lucille heard them not,—she was on that breast which never should have deserted her.

Effectually to protect his friends, St. Amand took up his quarters at their house; and for two days he was once more under the same roof as Lucille. He never recurred voluntarily to Julie; he answered Lucille's timid inquiry after her health briefly, and with coldness, but he spoke with all the enthusiasm of a long-pent and ardent spirit of the new profession he had embraced. Glory seemed now to be his only mistress; and the vivid delusion of the first bright dreams of the Revolution filled his mind, broke from his tongue, and lighted up those dark eyes which Lucille had redeemed to day.

She saw him depart at the head of his troops; she saw his proud crest glancing in the sun; she saw his steed winding through the narrow street; she saw that his last glance reverted to her, where she stood at the door; and, as he waved his adieu, she fancied that there was on his face that look of deep and grateful tenderness which reminded her of the one bright epoch of her life.

She was right; St. Amand had long since in bitterness repented of a transient infatuation, had long since distinguished the true Florimel from the false, and felt that, in Julie, Lucille's wrongs were avenged. But in the hurry and heat of war he plunged that regret—the keenest of all—which embodies the bitter words, "TOO LATE!"

Years passed away, and in the resumed tranquillity of Lucille's life the brilliant apparition of St. Amand appeared as something dreamed of, not seen. The star of Napoleon had risen above the horizon; the romance of his early career had commenced; and the campaign of Egypt had been the herald of those brilliant and meteoric successes which flashed forth from the gloom of the Revolution of France.

You are aware, dear Gertrude, how many in the French as well as the English troops returned home from Egypt blinded with the ophthalmia of that arid soil. Some of the young men in Lucille's town, who had joined Napoleon's army, came back darkened by that fearful affliction, and Lucille's alms and Lucille's aid and Lucille's sweet voice were ever at hand for those poor sufferers, whose common misfortune touched so thrilling a chord of her heart.

Her father was now dead, and she had only her mother to cheer amidst the ills of age. As one evening they sat at work together, Madame le Tisseur said, after a pause,—

"I wish, dear Lucille, thou couldst be persuaded to marry Justin; he loves thee well, and now that thou art yet young, and hast many years before thee, thou shouldst remember that when I die thou wilt be alone."

"Ah, cease, dearest mother, I never can marry now; and as for love—once taught in the bitter school in which I have learned the knowledge of myself—I cannot be deceived again."

"My Lucille, you do not know yourself. Never was woman loved if Justin does not love you; and never did lover feel with more real warmth how worthily he loved."

And this was true; and not of Justin alone, for Lucille's modest virtues, her kindly temper, and a certain undulating and feminine grace, which accompanied all her movements, had secured her as many conquests as if she had been beautiful. She had rejected all offers of marriage with a shudder; without even the throb of a flattered vanity. One memory, sadder, was also dearer to her than all things; and something sacred in its recollections made her deem it even a crime to think of effacing the past by a new affection.

"I believe," continued Madame le Tisseur, angrily, "that thou still thinkest fondly of him from whom only in the world thou couldst have experienced ingratitude."

"Nay, Mother," said Lucille, with a blush and a slight sigh, "Eugene is married to another."

While thus conversing, they heard a gentle and timid knock at the door; the latch was lifted. "This," said the rough

voice of a *commissionaire* of the town, "this, monsieur, is the house of Madame le Tisseur, and *voilà mademoiselle!*" A tall figure, with a shade over his eyes, and wrapped in a long military cloak, stood in the room. A thrill shot across Lucille's heart. He stretched out his arms. "Lucille," said that melancholy voice, which had made the music of her first youth, "where art thou, Lucille? Alas! she does not recognize St. Amand."

Thus was it indeed. By a singular fatality, the burning suns and the sharp dust of the plains of Egypt had smitten the young soldier, in the flush of his career, with a second — and this time with an irremediable — blindness! He had returned to France to find his hearth lonely. Julie was no more, — a sudden fever had cut her off in the midst of youth; and he had sought his way to Lucille's house, to see if one hope yet remained to him in the world!

And when, days afterwards, humbly and sadly he re-urged a former suit, did Lucille shut her heart to its prayer? Did her pride remember its wound; did she revert to his desertion; did she reply to the whisper of her yearning love, "*Thou hast been before forsaken*"? That voice and those darkened eyes pleaded to her with a pathos not to be resisted. "I am once more necessary to him," was all her thought; "if I reject him who will tend him?" In that thought was the motive of her conduct; in that thought gushed back upon her soul all the springs of checked but unconquered, unconquerable love! In that thought, she stood beside him at the altar, and pledged, with a yet holier devotion than she might have felt of yore, the vow of her imperishable truth.

And Lucille found, in the future, a reward, which the common world could never comprehend. With his blindness returned all the feelings she had first awakened in St. Amand's solitary heart; again he yearned for her step, again he missed even a moment's absence from his side, again her voice chased the shadow from his brow, and in her presence was a sense of shelter and of sunshine. He no longer sighed for the blessing he had lost; he reconciled himself to fate, and entered into that serenity of mood which mostly characterizes the blind.

Perhaps after we have seen the actual world, and experienced its hollow pleasures, we can resign ourselves the better to its exclusion; and as the cloister, which repels the ardour of our hope, is sweet to our remembrance, so the darkness loses its terror when experience has wearied us with the glare and travail of the day. It was something, too, as they advanced in life, to feel the chains that bound him to Lucille strengthening daily, and to cherish in his overflowing heart the sweetness of increasing gratitude; it was something that he could not see years wrinkle that open brow, or dim the tenderness of that touching smile; it was something that to him she was beyond the reach of time, and preserved to the verge of a grave (which received them both within a few days of each other) in all the bloom of her unwithering affection, in all the freshness of a heart that never could grow old!

Gertrude, who had broken in upon Trevelyman's story by a thousand anxious interruptions, and a thousand pretty apologies for interrupting, was charmed with a tale in which true love was made happy at last, although she did not forgive St. Amand his ingratitude, and although she declared, with a critical shake of the head, that "it was very unnatural that the mere beauty of Julie, or the mere want of it in Lucille, should have produced such an effect upon him, if he had ever *really* loved Lucille in his blindness."

As they passed through Malines, the town assumed an interest in Gertrude's eyes to which it scarcely of itself was entitled. She looked wistfully at the broad market-place, at a corner of which was one of those out-of-door groups of quiet and noiseless revellers, which Dutch art has raised from the Familiar to the Picturesque; and then glancing to the tower of St. Rembauld, she fancied, amidst the silence of noon, that she yet heard the plaintive cry of the blind orphan, "Fido, Fido, why hast thou deserted me?"

CHAPTER V.

ROTTERDAM. — THE CHARACTER OF THE DUTCH. — THEIR RESEMBLANCE TO THE GERMANS. — A DISPUTE BETWEEN VANE AND TREVILYAN, AFTER THE MANNER OF THE ANCIENT NOVELISTS, AS TO WHICH IS PREFERABLE, THE LIFE OF ACTION OR THE LIFE OF REPOSE. — TREVILYAN'S CONTRAST BETWEEN LITERARY AMBITION AND THE AMBITION OF PUBLIC LIFE.

OUR travellers arrived at Rotterdam on a bright and sunny day. There is a cheerfulness about the operations of Commerce,—a life, a bustle, an action which always exhilarate the spirits at the first glance. Afterwards they fatigue us; we get too soon behind the scenes, and find the base and troublous passions which move the puppets and conduct the drama.

But Gertrude, in whom ill health had not destroyed the vividness of impression that belongs to the inexperienced, was delighted at the cheeriness of all around her. As she leaned lightly on Trevilyan's arm, he listened with a forgetful joy to her questions and exclamations at the stir and liveliness of a city from which was to commence their pilgrimage along the Rhine. And indeed the scene was rife with the spirit of that people at once so active and so patient, so daring on the sea, so cautious on the land. Industry was visible everywhere; the vessels in the harbour, the crowded boat putting off to land, the throng on the quay,—all looked bustling and spoke of commerce. The city itself, on which the skies shone fairly through light and fleecy clouds, wore a cheerful aspect. The church of St. Lawrence rising above the clean, neat houses, and on one side trees thickly grouped, gayly contrasted at once the waters and the city.

"I like this place," said Gertrude's father, quietly; "it has an air of comfort."

"And an absence of grandeur," said Trevelyman.

"A commercial people are one great middle-class in their habits and train of mind," replied Vane; "and grandeur belongs to the extremes,—an impoverished population and a wealthy despot."

They went to see the statue of Erasmus, and the house in which he was born. Vane had a certain admiration for Erasmus which his companions did not share; he liked the quiet irony of the sage, and his knowledge of the world; and, besides, Vane was at that time of life when philosophers become objects of interest. At first they are teachers; secondly, friends; and it is only a few who arrive at the third stage, and find them deceivers. The Dutch are a singular people. Their literature is neglected, but it has some of the German vein in its strata,—the patience, the learning, the homely delineation, and even some traces of the mixture of the humorous and the terrible which form that genius for the grotesque so especially German—you find this in their legends and ghost-stories. But in Holland activity destroys, in Germany indolence nourishes, romance.

They stayed a day or two at Rotterdam, and then proceeded up the Rhine to Gorcum. The banks were flat and tame, and nothing could be less impressive of its native majesty than this part of the course of the great river.

"I never felt before," whispered Gertrude, tenderly, "how much there was of consolation in your presence; for here I am at last on the Rhine,—the blue Rhine, and how disappointed I should be if you were not by my side!"

"But, my Gertrude, you must wait till we have passed Cologne, before *the glories* of the Rhine burst upon you."

"It reverses life, my child," said the moralizing Vane; "and the stream flows through dulness at first, reserving its poetry for our perseverance."

"I will not allow your doctrine," said Trevelyman, as the ambitious ardour of his native disposition stirred within him. "Life has always action; it is our own fault if it ever be dull: youth has its enterprise, manhood its schemes; and even if infirmity creep upon age, the mind, the mind still triumphs

over the mortal clay, and in the quiet hermitage, among books, and from thoughts, keeps the great wheel within everlastingly in motion. No, the better class of spirits have always an antidote to the insipidity of a common career, they have ever energy at will — ”

“And never happiness!” answered Vane, after a pause, as he gazed on the proud countenance of Trevelyman, with that kind of calm, half-pitying interest which belonged to a character deeply imbued with the philosophy of a sad experience acting upon an unimpassioned heart. “And in truth, Trevelyman, it would please me if I could but teach you the folly of preferring the exercise of that energy of which you speak to the golden luxuries of rest. What ambition can ever bring an adequate reward? Not, surely, the ambition of letters, the desire of intellectual renown!”

“True,” said Trevelyman, quietly; “that dream I have long renounced; there is nothing palpable in literary fame,—it scarcely perhaps soothes the vain, it assuredly chafes the proud. In my earlier years I attempted some works which gained what the world, perhaps rightly, deemed a sufficient need of reputation; yet it was not sufficient to recompense myself for the fresh hours I had consumed, for the sacrifices of pleasure I had made. The subtle aims that had inspired me were not perceived; the thoughts that had seemed new and beautiful to me fell flat and lustreless on the soul of others. If I was approved, it was often for what I condemned myself; and I found that the trite commonplace and the false wit charmed, while the truth fatigued, and the enthusiasm revolted. For men of that genius to which I make no pretension, who have dwelt apart in the obscurity of their own thoughts, gazing upon stars that shine not for the dull sleepers of the world, it must be a keen sting to find the product of their labour confounded with a class, and to be mingled up in men’s judgment with the faults or merits of a tribe. Every great genius must deem himself original and alone in his conceptions. It is not enough for him that these conceptions should be approved as good, unless they are admitted as inventive, if they mix him with the herd he has

shunned, not separate him in fame as he has been separated in soul. Some Frenchman, the oracle of his circle, said of the poet of the 'Phédre,' 'Racine and the other imitators of Corneille;' and Racine, in his wrath, nearly forswore tragedy forever. It is in vain to tell the author that the public is the judge of his works. The author believes himself above the public, or he would never have written; and," continued Trevylyan, with enthusiasm, "he *is* above them; their fiat may crush his glory, but never his self-esteem. He stands alone and haughty amidst the wrecks of the temple he imagined he had raised 'TO THE FUTURE,' and retaliates neglect with scorn. But is this, the life of scorn, a pleasurable state of existence? Is it one to be cherished? Does even the moment of fame counterbalance the years of mortification? And what is there in literary fame itself present and palpable to its heir? His work is a pebble thrown into the deep; the stir lasts for a moment, and the wave closes up, to be susceptible no more to the same impression. The circle may widen to other lands and other ages, but around *him* it is weak and faint. The trifles of the day, the low politics, the base intrigues, occupy the tongue, and fill the thought of his contemporaries. He is less known than a mountebank, or a new dancer; his glory comes not home to him; it brings no present, no perpetual reward, like the applauses that wait the actor, or the actor-like murmur of the senate; and this, which vexes, also lowers him; his noble nature begins to nourish the base vices of jealousy, and the unwillingness to admire. Goldsmith is forgotten in the presence of a puppet; he feels it, and is mean; he expresses it, and is ludicrous. It is well to say that great minds will not stoop to jealousy; in the greatest minds, it is most frequent.¹ Few authors are ever so aware of the admiration they excite as to afford to be generous; and this melancholy truth revolts us with our own am-

¹ See the long list of names furnished by Disraeli, in that most exquisite work, "The Literary Character," vol. ii. p. 75. Plato, Xenophon, Chancer, Corneille, Voltaire, Dryden, the Caracci, Domenico Venetiano, murdered by his envious friend, and the gentle Castillo fainting away at the genius of Murillo.

bition. Shall we be demigods in our closets at the price of sinking below mortality in the world? No! it was from this deep sentiment of the unrealness of literary fame, of dissatisfaction at the fruits it produced, of fear for the meanness it engendered, that I resigned betimes all love for its career; and if, by the restless desire that haunts men who think much to write ever, I should be urged hereafter to literature, I will sternly teach myself to persevere in the indifference to its fame."

"You say as I would say," answered Vane, with his tranquil smile; "and your experience corroborates my theory. Ambition, then, is not the root of happiness. Why more in action than in letters?"

"Because," said Trevelyman, "in action we commonly gain in our life all the honour we deserve: the public judge of men better and more rapidly than of books. And he who takes to himself in action a high and pure ambition, associates it with so many objects, that, unlike literature, the failure of one is balanced by the success of the other. He, the creator of deeds, not resembling the creator of books, stands not alone; he is eminently social; he has many comrades, and without their aid he could not accomplish his designs. This divides and mitigates the impatient jealousy against others. He works for a cause, and knows early that he cannot monopolize its whole glory; he shares what he is aware it is impossible to engross. Besides, action leaves him no time for brooding over disappointment. The author has consumed his youth in a work,—it fails in glory. Can he write another work? Bid him call back another youth! But in action, the labour of the mind is from day to day. A week replaces what a week has lost, and all the aspirant's fame is of the present. It is lipped by the Babel of the living world; he is ever on the stage, and the spectators are ever ready to applaud. Thus perpetually in the service of others self ceases to be his world; he has no leisure to brood over real or imaginary wrongs; the excitement whirls on the machine till it is worn out—"

"And kicked aside," said Vane, "with the broken lumber

of men's other tools, in the chamber of their son's forgetfulness. Your man of action lasts but for an hour; the man of letters lasts for ages."

"We live not for ages," answered Trevylyan; "our life is on earth, and not in the grave."

"But even grant," continued Vane — "and I for one will concede the point — that posthumous fame is not worth the living agonies that obtain it, how are you better off in your poor and vulgar career of action? Would you assist the rulers? — servility! The people? — folly! If you take the great philosophical view which the worshippers of the past rarely take, but which, unknown to them, is their sole excuse, — namely, that the changes which *may* benefit the future unsettle the present; and that it is not the wisdom of practical legislation to risk the peace of our contemporaries in the hope of obtaining happiness for their posterity, — to what suspicions, to what charges are you exposed! You are deemed the foe of all liberal opinion, and you read your curses in the eyes of a nation. But take the side of the people. What caprice, what ingratitude! You have professed so much in theory, that you can never accomplish sufficient in practice. Moderation becomes a crime; to be prudent is to be perfidious. New demagogues, without temperance, because without principle, outstrip you in the moment of your greatest services. The public is the grave of a great man's deeds; it is never sated; its maw is eternally open; it perpetually craves for more. Where, in the history of the world, do you find the gratitude of a people? You find fervour, it is true, but not gratitude, — the fervour that exaggerates a benefit at one moment, but not the gratitude that remembers it the next year. Once disappoint them, and all your actions, all your sacrifices, are swept from their remembrance forever; they break the windows of the very house they have given you, and melt down their medals into bullets. Who serves man, ruler or peasant, serves the ungrateful; and all the ambitious are but types of a Wolsey or a De Witt."

"And what," said Trevylyan, "consoles a man in the ills that flesh is heir to, in that state of obscure repose, that se-

rene inactivity to which you would confine him? Is it not his conscience? Is it not his self-acquittal, or his self-approval?"

"Doubtless," replied Vane.

"Be it so," answered the high-souled Trevlyan; "the same consolation awaits us in action as in repose. We sedulously pursue what we deem to be true glory. We are maligned; but our soul acquits us. Could it do more in the scandal and the prejudice that assail us in private life? You are silent; but note how much deeper should be the comfort, how much loftier the self-esteem; for if calumny attack us in a wilful obscurity, what have we done to refute the calumny? How have we served our species? Have we 'scorned delight and loved laborious days'? Have we made the utmost of the 'talent' confided to our care? Have we done those good deeds to our race upon which we can retire,—an 'Estate of Beneficence,'—from the malice of the world, and feel that our deeds are our defenders? This is the consolation of virtuous actions; is it so of—even a virtuous—indolence?"

"You speak as a preacher," said Vane,—"I merely as a calculator; you of virtue in affliction, I of a life in ease."

"Well, then, if the consciousness of perpetual endeavour to advance our race be not alone happier than the life of ease, let us see what this vaunted ease really is. Tell me, is it not another name for *ennui*? This state of quiescence, this objectless, dreamless torpor, this transition *du lit à la table, de la table au lit*,—what more dreary and monotonous existence can you devise? Is it pleasure in this inglorious existence to think that you are serving pleasure? Is it freedom to be the slave to self? For I hold," continued Trevlyan, "that this jargon of 'consulting happiness,' this cant of living for ourselves, is but a mean as well as a false philosophy. Why this eternal reference to self? Is self alone to be consulted? Is even our happiness, did it truly consist in repose, really the great end of life? I doubt if we cannot ascend higher. I doubt if we cannot say with a great moralist, 'If virtue be not estimable in itself, we can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a bargain.' But, in fact, repose is

the poorest of all delusions; the very act of recurring to self brings about us all those ills of self from which, in the turmoil of the world, we can escape. We become hypochondriacs. Our very health grows an object of painful possession. We are so desirous to be well (for what is retirement without health?) that we are ever fancying ourselves ill; and, like the man in the 'Spectator,' we weigh ourselves daily, and live but by grains and scruples. Retirement is happy only for the poet, for to him it is *not* retirement. He secedes from one world but to gain another, and he finds not *ennui* in seclusion: why? Not because seclusion hath *repose*, but because it hath *occupation*. In one word, then, I say of action and of indolence, grant the same ills to both, and to action there is the readier escape or the nobler consolation."

Vane shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, my dear friend," said he, tapping his snuff-box with benevolent superiority, "you are much younger than I am!"

But these conversations, which Trevelyman and Vane often held together, dull as I fear this specimen must seem to the reader, had an inexpressible charm for Gertrude. She loved the lofty and generous vein of philosophy which Trevelyman embraced, and which, while it suited his ardent nature, contrasted a demeanour commonly hard and cold to all but herself. And young and tender as she was, his ambition infused its spirit into her fine imagination, and that passion for enterprise which belongs inseparably to romance. She loved to muse over his future lot, and in fancy to share its toils and to exult in its triumphs. And if sometimes she asked herself whether a career of action might not estrange him from her, she had but to turn her gaze upon his watchful eye,—and lo, he was by her side or at her feet!

CHAPTER VI.

GORCUM. — THE TOUR OF THE VIRTUES: A PHILOSOPHER'S
TALE.

It was a bright and cheery morning as they glided by Gorcum. The boats pulling to the shore full of fishermen and peasants in their national costume; the breeze freshly rippling the waters; the lightness of the blue sky; the loud and laughing voices from the boats,—all contributed to raise the spirit, and fill it with that indescribable gladness which is the physical sense of life.

The tower of the church, with its long windows and its round dial, rose against the clear sky; and on a bench under a green bush facing the water sat a jolly Hollander, refreshing the breezes with the fumes of his national weed.

"How little it requires to make a journey pleasant, when the companions are our friends!" said Gertrude, as they sailed along. "Nothing can be duller than these banks, nothing more delightful than this voyage."

"Yet what tries the affections of people for each other so severely as a journey together?" said Vane. "That perpetual companionship from which there is no escaping; that confinement, in all our moments of ill-humour and listlessness, with persons who want us to look amused — ah, it is a severe ordeal for friendship to pass through! A post-chaise must have jolted many an intimacy to death."

"You speak feelingly, dear father," said Gertrude, laughing; "and, I suspect, with a slight desire to be sarcastic upon us. Yet, seriously, I should think that travel must be like life, and that good persons must be always agreeable companions to each other."

"Good persons, my Gertrude!" answered Vane, with a smile. "Alas! I fear the good weary each other quite as

much as the bad. What say you, Trevvlyan,— would Virtue be a pleasant companion from Paris to Petersburg? Ah, I see you intend to be on Gertrude's side of the question. Well now, if I tell you a story, since stories are so much the fashion with you, in which you shall find that the Virtues themselves actually made the experiment of a tour, will you promise to attend to the moral?"

"Oh, dear father, anything for a story," cried Gertrude; "especially from you, who have not told us one all the way. Come, listen, Albert; nay, listen to your new rival."

And, pleased to see the vivacity of the invalid, Vane began as follows:—

THE TOUR OF THE VIRTUES:

A PHILOSOPHER'S TALE.

ONCE upon a time, several of the Virtues, weary of living forever with the Bishop of Norwich, resolved to make a little excursion; accordingly, though they knew everything on earth was very ill prepared to receive them, they thought they might safely venture on a tour from Westminster Bridge to Richmond. The day was fine, the wind in their favour, and as to entertainment,— why, there seemed, according to Gertrude, to be no possibility of any disagreement among the Virtues.

They took a boat at Westminster stairs; and just as they were about to push off, a poor woman, all in rags, with a child in her arms, implored their compassion. Charity put her hand into her reticule and took out a shilling. Justice, turning round to look after the luggage, saw the folly which Charity was about to commit. "Heavens!" cried Justice, seizing poor Charity by the arm, "what are you doing? Have you never read Political Economy? Don't you know that indiscriminate almsgiving is only the encouragement to Idleness, the mother of Vice? You a Virtue, indeed! I'm ashamed of you. Get along with you, good woman;— yet stay, there is a ticket for soup at the Mendicity Society; they'll see if you're a proper object of compassion." But Charity is quicker than Justice, and slipping her hand behind

her, the poor woman got the shilling and the ticket for soup too. Economy and Generosity saw the double gift. "What waste!" cried Economy, frowning; "what! a ticket and a shilling? *either* would have sufficed."

"Either!" said Generosity, "fie! Charity should have given the poor creature half-a-crown, and Justice a dozen tickets!" So the next ten minutes were consumed in a quarrel between the four Virtues, which would have lasted all the way to Richmond, if Courage had not advised them to get on shore and fight it out. Upon this, the Virtues suddenly perceived they had a little forgotten themselves, and Generosity offering the first apology, they made it up, and went on very agreeably for the next mile or two.

The day now grew a little overcast, and a shower seemed at hand. Prudence, who had on a new bonnet, suggested the propriety of putting to shore for half an hour; Courage was for braving the rain; but, as most of the Virtues are ladies, Prudence carried it. Just as they were about to land, another boat cut in before them very uncivilly, and gave theirs such a shake that Charity was all but overboard. The company on board the uncivil boat, who evidently thought the Virtues extremely low persons, for they had nothing very fashionable about their exterior, burst out laughing at Charity's discomposure, especially as a large basket full of buns, which Charity carried with her for any hungry-looking children she might encounter at Richmond, fell pounce into the water. Courage was all on fire; he twisted his mustache, and would have made an onset on the enemy, if, to his great indignation, Meekness had not forestalled him, by stepping mildly into the hostile boat and offering both cheeks to the foe. This was too much even for the incivility of the boatmen; they made their excuses to the Virtues, and Courage, who is no bully, thought himself bound discontentedly to accept them. But oh! if you had seen how Courage used Meekness afterwards, you could not have believed it possible that one Virtue could be so enraged with another. This quarrel between the two threw a damp on the party; and they proceeded on their voyage, when the shower was over, with anything but cor-

diality. I spare you the little squabbles that took place in the general conversation,—how Economy found fault with all the villas by the way, and Temperance expressed becoming indignation at the luxuries of the City barge. They arrived at Richmond, and Temperance was appointed to order the dinner; meanwhile Hospitality, walking in the garden, fell in with a large party of Irishmen, and asked them to join the repast.

Imagine the long faces of Economy and Prudence, when they saw the addition to the company! Hospitality was all spirits; he rubbed his hands and called for champagne with the tone of a younger brother. Temperance soon grew scandalized, and Modesty herself coloured at some of the jokes; but Hospitality, who was now half seas over, called the one a milksop, and swore at the other as a prude. Away went the hours; it was time to return, and they made down to the water-side, thoroughly out of temper with one another, Economy and Generosity quarrelling all the way about the bill and the waiters. To make up the sum of their mortification, they passed a boat where all the company were in the best possible spirits, laughing and whooping like mad; and discovered these jolly companions to be two or three agreeable Vices, who had put themselves under the management of Good Temper.

“So you see, Gertrude, that even the Virtues may fall at loggerheads with each other, and pass a very sad time of it, if they happen to be of opposite dispositions, and have forgotten to take Good Temper with them.”

“Ah,” said Gertrude, “but you have overloaded your boat; too many Virtues might contradict one another, but not a few.”

“Voilà ce que veux dire,” said Vane; “but listen to the sequel of my tale, which now takes a new moral.”

At the end of the voyage, and after a long, sulky silence, Prudence said, with a thoughtful air, “My dear friends, I have been thinking that as long as we keep so entirely together, never mixing with the rest of the world, we shall waste our lives in quarrelling amongst ourselves and run the

risk of being still less liked and sought after than we already are. You know that we are none of us popular; every one is quite contented to see us represented in a vaudeville, or described in an essay. Charity, indeed, has her name often taken in vain at a bazaar or a subscription; and the miser as often talks of the duty he owes to *me*, when he sends the stranger from his door or his grandson to jail: but still we only resemble so many wild beasts, whom everybody likes to see but nobody cares to possess. Now, I propose that we should all separate and take up our abode with some mortal or other for a year, with the power of changing at the end of that time should we not feel ourselves comfortable,—that is, should we not find that we do all the good we intend; let us try the experiment, and on this day twelvemonths let us all meet under the largest oak in Windsor Forest, and recount what has befallen us.” Prudence ceased, as she always does when she has said enough; and, delighted at the project, the Virtues agreed to adopt it on the spot. They were enchanted at the idea of setting up for themselves, and each not doubting his or her success,—for Economy in her heart thought Generosity no Virtue at all, and Meekness looked on Courage as little better than a heathen.

Generosity, being the most eager and active of all the Virtues, set off first on his journey. Justice followed, and kept up with him, though at a more even pace. Charity never heard a sigh, or saw a squalid face, but she stayed to cheer and console the sufferer,—a kindness which somewhat retarded her progress.

Courage espied a travelling carriage, with a man and his wife in it quarrelling most conjugally, and he civilly begged he might be permitted to occupy the vacant seat opposite the lady. Economy still lingered, inquiring for the cheapest inns. Poor Modesty looked round and sighed, on finding herself so near to London, where she was almost wholly unknown; but resolved to bend her course thither for two reasons: first, for the novelty of the thing; and, secondly, not liking to expose herself to any risks by a journey on the Continent. Prudence, though the first to project, was the last to

execute; and therefore resolved to remain where she was for that night, and take daylight for her travels.

The year rolled on, and the Virtues, punctual to the appointment, met under the oak-tree; they all came nearly at the same time, excepting Economy, who had got into a return post-chaise, the horses to which, having been forty miles in the course of the morning, had foundered by the way, and retarded her journey till night set in. The Virtues looked sad and sorrowful, as people are wont to do after a long and fruitless journey; and, somehow or other, such was the wearing effect of their intercourse with the world, that they appeared wonderfully diminished in size.

"Ah, my dear Generosity," said Prudence, with a sigh, "as you were the first to set out on your travels, pray let us hear your adventures first."

"You must know, my dear sisters," said Generosity, "that I had not gone many miles from you before I came to a small country town, in which a marching regiment was quartered, and at an open window I beheld, leaning over a gentleman's chair, the most beautiful creature imagination ever pictured; her eyes shone out like two suns of perfect happiness, and she was almost cheerful enough to have passed for Good Temper herself. The gentleman over whose chair she leaned was her husband; they had been married six weeks; he was a lieutenant with £100 a year besides his pay. Greatly affected by their poverty, I instantly determined, without a second thought, to ensconce myself in the heart of this charming girl. During the first hour in my new residence I made many wise reflections such as — that Love never was so perfect as when accompanied by Poverty; what a vulgar error it was to call the unmarried state '*Single Blessedness*;' how wrong it was of us Virtues never to have tried the marriage bond; and what a falsehood it was to say that husbands neglected their wives, for never was there anything in nature so devoted as the love of a husband — six weeks married!

"The next morning, before breakfast, as the charming Fanny was waiting for her husband, who had not yet finished his toilet, a poor, wretched-looking object appeared at the

window, tearing her hair and wringing her hands; her husband had that morning been dragged to prison, and her seven children had fought for the last mouldy crust. Prompted by me, Fanny, without inquiring further into the matter, drew from her silken purse a five-pound note, and gave it to the beggar, who departed more amazed than grateful. Soon after, the lieutenant appeared. 'What the devil, another bill!' muttered he, as he tore the yellow wafer from a large, square, folded, bluish piece of paper. 'Oh, ah! confound the fellow, *he* must be paid. I must trouble you, Fanny, for £15 to pay this saddler's bill.'

"'Fifteen pounds, love?' stammered Fanny, blushing.

"'Yes, dearest, the £15 I gave you yesterday.'

"'I have only £10,' said Fanny, hesitatingly; 'for such a poor, wretched-looking creature was here just now, that I was obliged to give her £5.'

"'Five pounds? good Heavens!' exclaimed the astonished husband; 'I shall have no more money this three weeks.' He frowned, he bit his lips, nay, he even wrung his hands, and walked up and down the room; worse still, he broke forth with — 'Surely, madam, you did not suppose, when you married a lieutenant in a marching regiment, that he could afford to indulge in the whim of giving £5 to every mendicant who held out her hand to you? You did not, I say, madam, imagine' — but the bridegroom was interrupted by the convulsive sobs of his wife: it was their first quarrel, they were but six weeks married; he looked at her for one moment sternly, the next he was at her feet. 'Forgive me, dearest Fanny, — forgive me, for I cannot forgive myself. I was too great a wretch to say what I did; and do believe, my own Fanny, that while I may be too poor to indulge you in it, I do from my heart admire so noble, so disinterested, a generosity.' Not a little proud did I feel to have been the cause of this exemplary husband's admiration for his amiable wife, and sincerely did I rejoice at having taken up my abode with these *poor* people. But not to tire you, my dear sisters, with the minutiae of detail, I shall briefly say that things did not long remain in this delightful position; for before many

months had elapsed, poor Fanny had to bear with her husband's increased and more frequent storms of passion, unfollowed by any halcyon and honeymoon suings for forgiveness: for at my instigation every shilling went; and when there were no more to go, her trinkets and even her clothes followed. The lieutenant became a complete brute, and even allowed his unbridled tongue to call me — me, sisters, *me!* — ‘heartless Extravagance.’ His despicable brother-officers and their gossiping wives were no better; for they did nothing but animadvert upon my Fanny’s ostentation and absurdity, for by such names had they the impertinence to call *me*. Thus grieved to the soul to find myself the cause of all poor Fanny’s misfortunes, I resolved at the end of the year to leave her, being thoroughly convinced that, however amiable and praiseworthy I might be in myself, I was totally unfit to be bosom friend and adviser to the wife of a lieutenant in a marching regiment, with only £100 a year besides his pay.”

The Virtues groaned their sympathy with the unfortunate Fanny; and Prudence, turning to Justice, said, “I long to hear what you have been doing, for I am certain you cannot have occasioned harm to any one.”

Justice shook her head and said: “Alas! I find that there are times and places when even I do better not to appear, as a short account of my adventures will prove to you. No sooner had I left you than I instantly repaired to India, and took up my abode with a Brahmin. I was much shocked by the dreadful inequalities of condition that reigned in the several castes, and I longed to relieve the poor Pariah from his ignominious destiny; accordingly I set seriously to work on reform. I insisted upon the iniquity of abandoning men from their birth to an irremediable state of contempt, from which no virtue could exalt them. The Brahmins looked upon *my* Brahmin with ineffable horror. They called *me* the most wicked of vices; they saw no distinction between Justice and Atheism. I uprooted their society — that was sufficient crime. But the worst was, that the Pariahs themselves regarded me with suspicion; they thought it unnatural in a Brahmin to care for a Pariah! And one called me ‘Madness,’

another, 'Ambition,' and a third, 'The Desire to innovate.' My poor Brahmin led a miserable life of it; when one day, after observing, at my dictation, that he thought a Pariah's life as much entitled to respect as a cow's, he was hurried away by the priests and secretly broiled on the altar as a fitting reward for his sacrilege. I fled hither in great tribulation, persuaded that in some countries even Justice may do harm."

"As for me," said Charity, not waiting to be asked, "I grieve to say that I was silly enough to take up my abode with an old lady in Dublin, who never knew what discretion was, and always acted from impulse; my instigation was irresistible, and the money she gave in her drives through the suburbs of Dublin was so lavishly spent that it kept all the rascals of the city in idleness and whiskey. I found, to my great horror, that I was a main cause of a terrible epidemic, and that to give alms without discretion was to spread poverty without help. I left the city when my year was out, and as ill-luck would have it, just at the time when I was most wanted."

"And oh," cried Hospitality, "I went to Ireland also. I fixed my abode with a squireen; I ruined him in a year, and only left him because he had no longer a hovel to keep me in."

"As for myself," said Temperance, "I entered the breast of an English legislator, and he brought in a bill against ale-houses; the consequence was, that the labourers took to gin; and I have been forced to confess that Temperance may be too zealous when she dictates too vehemently to others."

"Well," said Courage, keeping more in the background than he had ever done before, and looking rather ashamed of himself, "that travelling carriage I got into belonged to a German general and his wife, who were returning to their own country. Growing very cold as we proceeded, she wrapped me up in a polonaise; but the cold increasing, I inadvertently crept into her bosom. Once there I could not get out, and from thenceforward the poor general had considerably the worst of it. She became so provoking that I wondered how

he could refrain from an explosion. To do him justice, he did at last threaten to get out of the carriage; upon which, roused by me, she collared him — and conquered. When he got to his own district, things grew worse, for if any *aide-de-camp* offended her she insisted that he might be publicly reprimanded; and should the poor general refuse she would with her own hands confer a caning upon the delinquent. The additional force she had gained in me was too much odds against the poor general, and he died of a broken heart, six months after my *liaison* with his wife. She after this became so dreaded and detested, that a conspiracy was formed to poison her; *this* daunted even me, so I left her without delay, — *et me voici!* ”

“Humph,” said Meekness, with an air of triumph, “I, at least, have been more successful than you. On seeing much in the papers of the cruelties practised by the Turks on the Greeks, I thought my presence would enable the poor sufferers to bear their misfortunes calmly. I went to Greece, then, at a moment when a well-planned and practicable scheme of emancipating themselves from the Turkish yoke was arousing their youth. Without confining myself to one individual, I flitted from breast to breast; I meekened the whole nation; my remonstrances against the insurrection succeeded, and I had the satisfaction of leaving a whole people ready to be killed or strangled with the most Christian resignation in the world.”

The Virtues, who had been a little cheered by the opening self-complacency of Meekness, would not, to her great astonishment, allow that she had succeeded a whit more happily than her sisters, and called next upon Modesty for her confession.

“You know,” said that amiable young lady, “that I went to London in search of a situation. I spent three months of the twelve in going from house to house, but I could not get a single person to receive me. The ladies declared that they never saw so old-fashioned a gawkey, and civilly recommended me to their abigails; the abigails turned me round with a stare, and then pushed me down to the kitchen and the

fat scullion-maids, who assured me that, 'in the respectable families they had the honour to live in, they had never even heard of my name.' One young housemaid, just from the country, did indeed receive me with some sort of civility; but she very soon lost me in the servants' hall. I now took refuge with the other sex, as the least uncourteous. I was fortunate enough to find a young gentleman of remarkable talents, who welcomed me with open arms. He was full of learning, gentleness, and honesty. I had only one rival,—Ambition. We both contended for an absolute empire over him. Whatever Ambition suggested, I damped. Did Ambition urge him to begin a book, I persuaded him it was not worth publication. Did he get up, full of knowledge, and instigated by my rival, to make a speech (for he was in parliament), I shocked him with the sense of his assurance, I made his voice droop and his accents falter. At last, with an indignant sigh, my rival left him; he retired into the country, took orders, and renounced a career he had fondly hoped would be serviceable to others; but finding I did not suffice for his happiness, and piqued at his melancholy, I left him before the end of the year, and he has since taken to drinking!"

The eyes of the Virtues were all turned to Prudence. She was their last hope. "I am just where I set out," said that discreet Virtue; "I have done neither good nor harm. To avoid temptation I went and lived with a hermit to whom I soon found that I could be of no use beyond warning him not to overboil his peas and lentils, not to leave his door open when a storm threatened, and not to fill his pitcher too full at the neighbouring spring. I am thus the only one of you that never did harm; but only because I am the only one of you that never had an opportunity of doing it! In a word," continued Prudence, thoughtfully,—*"in a word, my friends, circumstances are necessary to the Virtues themselves. Had, for instance, Economy changed with Generosity, and gone to the poor lieutenant's wife, and had I lodged with the Irish squireen instead of Hospitality, what misfortunes would have been saved to both! Alas! I perceive we lose all our efficacy when we are misplaced; and then, though in reality Virtues,*

we operate as Vices. Circumstances must be favourable to our exertions, and harmonious with our nature; and we lose our very divinity unless Wisdom direct our footsteps to the home we should inhabit and the dispositions we should govern."

The story was ended, and the travellers began to dispute about its moral. Here let us leave them.

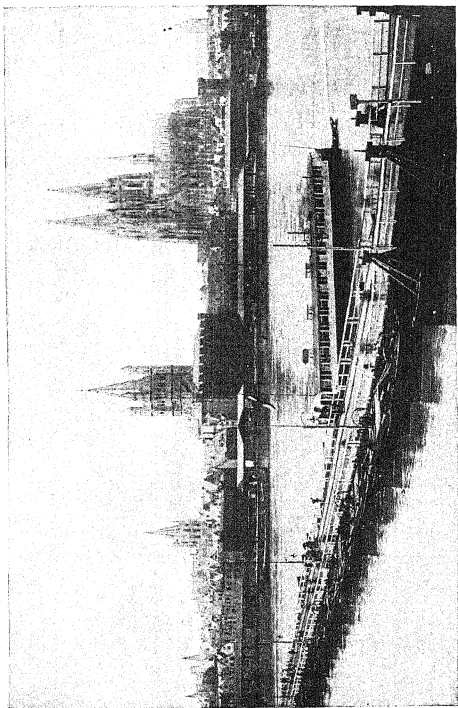
CHAPTER VII.

COLOGNE. — THE TRACES OF THE ROMAN YOKE. — THE CHURCH OF ST. MARIA. — TREVYLIAN'S REFLECTIONS ON THE MONASTIC LIFE. — THE TOMB OF THE THREE KINGS. — AN EVENING EXCURSION ON THE RHINE.

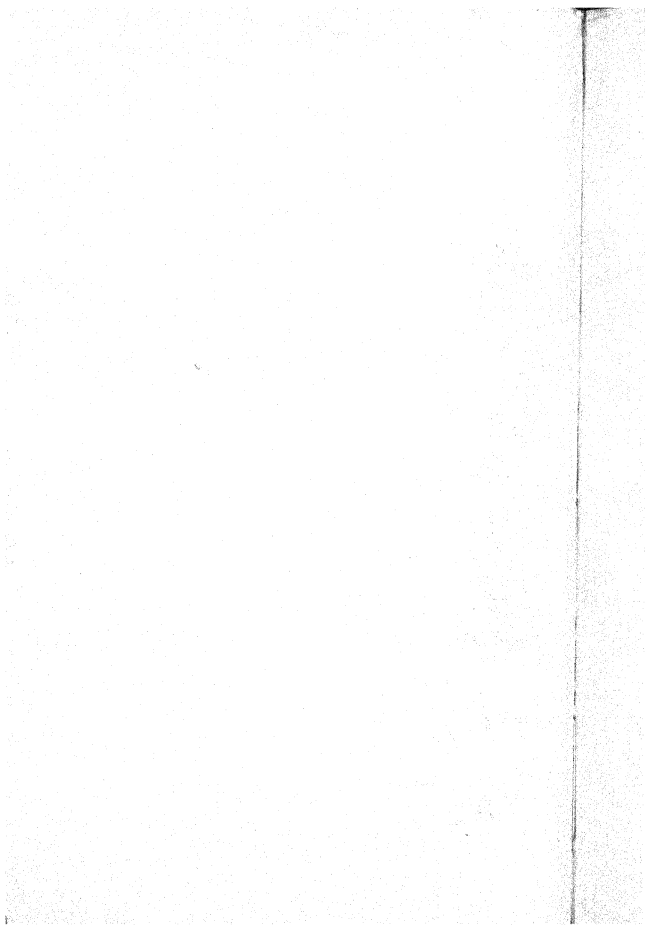
ROME — magnificent Rome! wherever the pilgrim wends, the traces of thy dominion greet his eyes. Still in the heart of the bold German race is graven the print of the eagle's claws; and amidst the haunted regions of the Rhine we pause to wonder at the great monuments of the Italian yoke.

At Cologne our travellers rested for some days. They were in the city to which the camp of Marcus Agrippa had given birth; that spot had resounded with the armed tread of the legions of Trajan. In that city, Vitellius, Sylvanus, were proclaimed emperors. By that church did the latter receive his death.

As they passed round the door they saw some peasants loitering on the sacred ground; and when they noted the delicate cheek of Gertrude they uttered their salutations with more than common respect. Where they then were the building swept round in a circular form; and at its base it is supposed by tradition to retain something of the ancient Roman masonry. Just before them rose the spire of a plain and unadorned church, singularly contrasting the pomp of the old with the simplicity of the innovating creed.



COLOGNE, BRIDGE OF BOATS AND CATHEDRAL.



The church of St. Maria occupies the site of the Roman Capitol, and the place retains the Roman name; and still something in the aspect of the people betrays the hereditary blood.

Gertrude, whose nature was strongly impressed with *the venerating character*, was fond of visiting the old Gothic churches, which, with so eloquent a moral, unite the living with the dead.

"Pause for a moment," said Trevelyhan, before they entered the church of St. Mary. "What recollections crowd upon us! On the site of the Roman Capitol a Christian church and a convent are erected! By whom? The mother of Charles Martel,—the Conqueror of the Saracen, the arch-hero of Christendom itself! And to these scenes and calm retreats, to the cloisters of the convent once belonging to this church, fled the bruised spirit of a royal sufferer,—the victim of Richelieu,—the unfortunate and ambitious Mary de Medicis. Alas! the cell and the convent are but a vain emblem of that desire to fly to God which belongs to Distress; the solitude soothes, but the monotony recalls, regret. And for my own part in my frequent tours through Catholic countries, I never saw the still walls in which monastic vanity hoped to shut out the world, but a melancholy came over me! What hearts at war with themselves! what unceasing regrets! what pinnings after the past! what long and beautiful years devoted to a moral grave, by a momentary rashness, an impulse, a disappointment! But in these churches the lesson is more impressive and less sad. The weary heart has ceased to ache; the burning pulses are still; the troubled spirit has flown to the only rest which is not a deceit. Power and love, hope and fear, avarice, ambition,—they are quenched at last! Death is the only monastery, the tomb is the only cell."

"Your passion is ever for active life," said Gertrude. "You allow no charm to solitude, and contemplation to you seems torture. If any great sorrow ever come upon you, you will never retire to seclusion as its balm. You will plunge into the world, and lose your individual existence in the universal rush of life."

"Ah, talk not of sorrow!" said Trevelyman, wildly. "Let us enter the church."

They went afterwards to the celebrated cathedral, which is considered one of the noblest of the architectural triumphs of Germany; but it is yet more worthy of notice from the Pilgrim of Romance than the searcher after antiquity, for here, behind the grand altar, is the Tomb of the Three Kings of Cologne,—the three worshippers whom tradition humbled to our Saviour. Legend is rife with a thousand tales of the relics of this tomb. The Three Kings of Cologne are the tutelary names of that golden superstition which has often more votaries than the religion itself from which it springs: and to Gertrude the simple story of Lucille sufficed to make her for the moment credulous of the sanctity of the spot. Behind the tomb three Gothic windows cast their "dim, religious light" over the tessellated pavement and along the Ionic pillars. They found some of the more credulous believers in the authenticity of the relics kneeling before the tomb, and they arrested their steps, fearful to disturb the superstition which is never without something of sanctity when contented with prayer and forgetful of persecution. The bones of the Magi are still supposed to consecrate the tomb, and on the higher part of the monument the artist has delineated their adoration to the infant Saviour.

That evening came on with a still and tranquil beauty, and as the sun hastened to its close they launched their boat for an hour or two's excursion upon the Rhine. Gertrude was in that happy mood when the quiet of nature is enjoyed like a bath for the soul, and the presence of him she so idolized deepened that stillness into a more delicious and subduing calm. Little did she dream as the boat glided over the water, and the towers of Cologne rose in the blue air of evening, how few were those hours that divided her from the tomb! But, in looking back to the life of one we have loved, how dear is the thought that the latter days were the days of light, that the cloud never chilled the beauty of the setting sun, and that if the years of existence were brief, all that existence has most tender, most sacred, was crowded into that

space! Nothing dark, then, or bitter, rests with our remembrance of the lost: *we* are the mourners, but pity is not for the mourned, — our grief is purely selfish; when we turn to its object, the hues of happiness are round it, and that very love which is the parent of our woe was the consolation, the triumph, of the departed!

The majestic Rhine was calm as a lake; the splashing of the oar only broke the stillness, and after a long pause in their conversation, Gertrude, putting her hand on Trevelyman's arm, reminded him of a promised story: for he too had moods of abstraction, from which, in her turn, she loved to lure him; and his voice to her had become a sort of want.

"Let it be," said she, "a tale suited to the hour; no fierce tradition, — nay, no grotesque fable, but of the tenderer dye of superstition. Let it be of love, of woman's love, — of the love that defies the grave: for surely even after death it lives; and heaven would scarcely be heaven if memory were banished from its blessings."

"I recollect," said Trevelyman, after a slight pause, "a short German legend, the simplicity of which touched me much when I heard it; but," added he, with a slight smile, "so much more faithful appears in the legend the love of the woman than that of the man, that I at least ought scarcely to recite it."

"Nay," said Gertrude, tenderly, "the fault of the inconstant only heightens our gratitude to the faithful."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOUL IN PURGATORY; OR LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THE angels strung their harps in heaven, and their music went up like a stream of odours to the pavilions of the Most High; but the harp of Seralim was sweeter than that of his

fellows, and the Voice of the Invisible One (for the angels themselves know not the glories of Jehovah — only far in the depths of heaven they see one Unsleeping Eye watching forever over Creation) was heard saying,—

“Ask a gift for the love that burns in thy song, and it shall be given thee.” And Seralim answered,—

“There is in that place which men call Purgatory, and which is the escape from hell, but the painful porch of heaven, many souls that adore Thee, and yet are punished justly for their sins; grant me the boon to visit them at times, and solace their suffering by the hymns of the harp that is consecrated to Thee!”

And the Voice answered,—

“Thy prayer is heard, O gentlest of the angels! and it seems good to Him who chastises but from love. Go! Thou hast thy will.”

Then the angel sang the praises of God; and when the song was done he rose from his azure throne at the right hand of Gabriel, and, spreading his rainbow wings, he flew to that melancholy orb which, nearest to earth, echoes with the shrieks of souls that by torture become pure. There the unhappy ones see from afar the bright courts they are hereafter to obtain, and the shapes of glorious beings, who, fresh from the Fountains of Immortality, walk amidst the gardens of Paradise, and feel that their happiness hath no morrow; and this thought consoles amidst their torments, and makes the true difference between Purgatory and Hell.

Then the angel folded his wings, and entering the crystal gates, sat down upon a blasted rock and struck his divine lyre, and a peace fell over the wretched; the demon ceased to torture and the victim to wail. As sleep to the mourners of earth was the song of the angel to the souls of the purifying star: one only voice amidst the general stillness seemed not lulled by the angel; it was the voice of a woman, and it continued to cry out with a sharp cry,—

“Oh, Adenheim, Adenheim! mourn not for the lost!”

The angel struck chord after chord, till his most skilful melodies were exhausted; but still the solitary voice, unheed-

ing — unconscious of — the sweetest harp of the angel choir, cried out,—

“Oh, Adenheim, Adenheim! mourn not for the lost!”

Then Seralim’s interest was aroused, and approaching the spot whence the voice came, he saw the spirit of a young and beautiful girl chained to a rock, and the demons lying idly by. And Seralim said to the demons, “Doth the song lull ye thus to rest?”

And they answered, “Her care for another is bitterer than all our torments; therefore are we idle.”

Then the angel approached the spirit, and said in a voice which stilled her cry — for in what state do we outlive sympathy? — “Wherefore, O daughter of earth, wherefore wailest thou with the same plaintive wail; and why doth the harp that soothes the most guilty of thy companions fail in its melody with thee?”

“O radiant stranger,” answered the poor spirit, “thou speakest to one who on earth loved God’s creature more than God; therefore is she thus justly sentenced. But I know that my poor Adenheim mourns ceaselessly for me, and the thought of his sorrow is more intolerable to me than all that the demons can inflict.”

“And how knowest thou that he laments thee?” asked the angel.

“Because I know with what agony I should have mourned for *him*,” replied the spirit, simply.

The divine nature of the angel was touched; for love is the nature of the sons of heaven. “And how,” said he, “can I minister to thy sorrow?”

A transport seemed to agitate the spirit, and she lifted up her mistlike and impalpable arms, and cried,—

“Give me — oh, give me to return to earth, but for one little hour, that I may visit my Adenheim; and that, concealing from him my present sufferings, I may comfort him in his own.”

“Alas!” said the angel, turning away his eyes, — for angels may not weep in the sight of others, — “I could, indeed, grant thee this boon, but thou knowest not the penalty. For the

souls in Purgatory may return to Earth, but heavy is the sentence that awaits their return. In a word, for one hour on earth thou must add a thousand years to the torture of thy confinement here!"

"Is that all?" cried the spirit. "Willingly then will I brave the doom. Ah, surely they love not in heaven, or thou wouldst know, O Celestial Visitant, that one hour of consolation to the one we love is worth a thousand ages of torture to ourselves! Let me comfort and convince my Adenheim; no matter what becomes of me."

Then the angel looked on high, and he saw in far distant regions, which in that orb none else could discern, the rays that parted from the all-guarding Eye; and heard the Voice of the Eternal One bidding him act as his pity whispered. He looked on the spirit, and her shadowy arms stretched pleadingly towards him; he uttered the word that loosens the bars of the gate of Purgatory; and lo, the spirit had re-entered the human world.

It was night in the halls of the lord of Adenheim, and he sat at the head of his glittering board. Loud and long was the laugh, and merry the jest that echoed round; and the laugh and the jest of the lord of Adenheim were louder and merrier than all. And by his right side sat a beautiful lady; and ever and anon he turned from others to whisper soft vows in her ear.

"And oh," said the bright dame of Falkenberg, "thy words what ladye can believe? Didst thou not utter the same oaths, and promise the same love, to Ida, the fair daughter of Loden, and now but three little months have closed upon her grave?"

"By my halidom," quoth the young lord of Adenheim, "thou dost thy beauty marvellous injustice. Ida! Nay, thou mockest me; I love the daughter of Loden! Why, how then should I be worthy thee? A few gay words, a few passing smiles,—behold all the love Adenheim ever bore to Ida. Was it my fault if the poor fool misconstrued such common courtesy? Nay, dearest lady, this heart is virgin to thee."

"And what!" said the lady of Falkenberg, as she suffered

the arm of Adenheim to encircle her slender waist, "didst thou not grieve for her loss?"

"Why, verily, yes, for the first week; but in thy bright eyes I found ready consolation."

At this moment, the lord of Adenheim thought he heard a deep sigh behind him; he turned, but saw nothing, save a slight mist that gradually faded away, and vanished in the distance. Where was the necessity for Ida to reveal herself?

"And thou didst not, then, do thine errand to thy lover?" said Seralim, as the spirit of the wronged Ida returned to Purgatory.

"Bid the demons recommence their torture," was poor Ida's answer.

"And was it for this that thou added a thousand years to thy doom?"

"Alas!" answered Ida, "after the single hour I have endured on Earth, there seems to be but little terrible in a thousand fresh years of Purgatory!"¹

"What! is the story ended?" asked Gertrude.

"Yes."

"Nay, surely the thousand years were not added to poor Ida's doom; and Seralim bore her back with him to Heaven?"

"The legend saith no more. The writer was contented to show us the perpetuity of woman's love —"

"And its reward," added Vane.

"It was not *I* who drew that last conclusion, Albert," whispered Gertrude.

¹ This story is principally borrowed from a foreign soil. It seemed to the author worthy of being transferred to an English one, although he fears that much of its singular beauty in the original has been lost by the way.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCENERY OF THE RHINE ANALOGOUS TO THE GERMAN
LITERARY GENIUS. — THE DRACHENFELS.

ON leaving Cologne, the stream winds round among banks that do not yet fulfil the promise of the Rhine; but they increase in interest as you leave Surdt and Godorf. The peculiar character of the river does not, however, really appear, until by degrees the Seven Mountains, and "THE CASTLED CRAG OF DRACHENFELS" above them all, break upon the eye. Around Nieder Cassel and Rheidt the vines lie thick and clustering; and, by the shore, you see from place to place the islands stretching their green length along, and breaking the exulting tide. Village rises upon village, and viewed from the distance as you sail, the pastoral errors that enamoured us of the village life crowd thick and fast upon us. So still do these hamlets seem, so sheltered from the passions of the world, — as if the passions were not like winds, only felt where they breathe, and invisible save by their effects! Leaping into the broad bosom of the Rhine come many a stream and rivulet upon either side. Spire upon spire rises and sinks as you sail on. Mountain and city, the solitary island, the castled steep, like the dreams of ambition, suddenly appear, proudly swell, and dimly fade away.

"You begin now," said Trevelyman, "to understand the character of the German literature. The Rhine is an emblem of its luxuriance, its fertility, its romance. The best commentary to the German genius is a visit to the German scenery. The mighty gloom of the Hartz, the feudal towers that look over vines and deep valleys on the legendary Rhine; the gigantic remains of antique power, profusely scattered over plain, mount, and forest; the thousand mixed recollections that hallow the ground; the stately Roman, the stalwart

Goth, the chivalry of the feudal age, and the dim brotherhood of the ideal world, have here alike their record and their remembrance. And over such scenes wanders the young German student. Instead of the pomp and luxury of the English traveller, the thousand devices to cheat the way, he has but his volume in his hand, his knapsack at his back. From such scenes he draws and hives all that various store which after years ripen to invention. Hence the florid mixture of the German muse,—the classic, the romantic, the contemplative, the philosophic, and the superstitious; each the result of actual meditation over different scenes; each the produce of separate but confused recollections. As the Rhine flows, so flows the national genius, by mountain and valley, the wildest solitude, the sudden spires of ancient cities, the mouldered castle, the stately monastery, the humble cot,—grandeur and homeliness, history and superstition, truth and fable, succeeding one another so as to blend into a whole.

“But,” added Trevelyán, a moment afterwards, “the Ideal is passing slowly away from the German mind; a spirit for the more active and the more material literature is springing up amongst them. The revolution of mind gathers on, preceding stormy events; and the memories that led their grandsires to contemplate will urge the youth of the next generation to dare and to act.”¹

Thus conversing, they continued their voyage, with a fair wave and beneath a lucid sky.

The vessel now glided beside the Seven Mountains and the Drachenfels.

The sun, slowly setting, cast his yellow beams over the smooth waters. At the foot of the mountains lay a village deeply sequestered in shade; and above, the Ruin of the Drachenfels caught the richest beams of the sun. Yet thus alone, though lofty, the ray cheered not the gloom that hung over the giant rock: it stood on high, like some great name on which the light of glory may shine, but which is associated with a certain melancholy, from the solitude to which its very height above the level of the herd condemned its owner!

¹ Is not this prediction already fulfilled? — 1849.

CHAPTER X.

THE LEGEND OF ROLAND. — THE ADVENTURES OF NYMPHALIN
ON THE ISLAND OF NONNEWERTH. — HER SONG. — THE DE-
CAY OF THE FAIRY-FAITH IN ENGLAND.

ON the shore opposite the Drachenfels stand the Ruins of Rolandseck, — they are the shattered crown of a lofty and perpendicular mountain, consecrated to the memory of the brave Roland; below, the trees of an island to which the lady of Roland retired, rise thick and verdant from the smooth tide.

Nothing can exceed the eloquent and wild grandeur of the whole scene. That spot is the pride and beauty of the Rhine.

The legend that consecrates the tower and the island is briefly told; it belongs to a class so common to the Romaunts of Germany. Roland goes to the wars. A false report of his death reaches his betrothed. She retires to the convent in the isle of Nonnewerth, and takes the irrevocable veil. Roland returns home, flushed with glory and hope, to find that the very fidelity of his affianced had placed an eternal barrier between them. He built the castle that bears his name, and which overlooks the monastery, and dwelt there till his death, — happy in the power at least to gaze, even to the last, upon those walls which held the treasure he had lost.

The willows droop in mournful luxuriance along the island, and harmonize with the memory that, through the desert of a thousand years, love still keeps green and fresh. Nor hath it permitted even those additions of fiction which, like mosses, gather by time over the truth that they adorn, yet adorning conceal, to mar the simple tenderness of the legend.

All was still in the island of Nonnewerth; the lights shone through the trees from the house that contained our travel-

lers. On one smooth spot where the islet shelves into the Rhine met the wandering fairies.

"Oh, Pipalee! how beautiful!" cried Nymphalin, as she stood enraptured by the wave, a star-beam shining on her, with her yellow hair "dancing its ringlets in the whistling wind." "For the first time since our departure I do not miss the green fields of England."

"Hist!" said Pipalee, under her breath; "I hear fairy steps,—they must be the steps of strangers."

"Let us retreat into this thicket of weeds," said Nymphalin, somewhat alarmed; "the good lord-treasurer is already asleep there." They whisked into what to them was a forest, for the reeds were two feet high, and there sure enough they found the lord-treasurer stretched beneath a bulrush, with his pipe beside him, for since he had been in Germany he had taken to smoking; and indeed wild thyme, properly dried, makes very good tobacco for a fairy. They also found Nip and Trip sitting very close together, Nip playing with her hair, which was exceedingly beautiful.

"What do you do here?" said Pipalee, shortly; for she was rather an old maid, and did not like fairies to be too close to each other.

"Watching my lord's slumber," said Nip.

"Pshaw!" said Pipalee.

"Nay," quoth Trip, blushing like a sea-shell; "there is no harm in *that*, I'm sure."

"Hush!" said the queen, peeping through the reeds.

And now forth from the green bosom of the earth came a tiny train; slowly, two by two, hand in hand, they swept from a small aperture, shadowed with fragrant herbs, and formed themselves into a ring: then came other fairies, laden with dainties, and presently two beautiful white mushrooms sprang up, on which the viands were placed, and lo, there was a banquet! Oh, how merry they were! what gentle peals of laughter, loud as a virgin's sigh! what jests! what songs! Happy race! if mortals could see you as often as I do, in the soft nights of summer, they would never be at a loss for entertainment. But as our English fairies looked on,

they saw that these foreign elves were of a different race from themselves: they were taller and less handsome, their hair was darker, they wore mustaches, and had something of a fiercer air. Poor Nymphalin was a little frightened; but presently soft music was heard floating along, something like the sound we suddenly hear of a still night when a light breeze steals through rushes, or wakes a ripple in some shallow brook dancing over pebbles. And lo, from the aperture of the earth came forth a fay, superbly dressed, and of a noble presence. The queen started back, Pipalee rubbed her eyes, Trip looked over Pipalee's shoulder, and Nip, pinching her arm, cried out amazed, "By the last new star, that is Prince von Fayzenheim!"

Poor Nymphalin gazed again, and her little heart beat under her bee's-wing bodice as if it would break. The prince had a melancholy air, and he sat apart from the banquet, gazing abstractedly on the Rhine.

"Ah!" whispered Nymphalin to herself, "does he think of me?"

Presently the prince drew forth a little flute hollowed from a small reed, and began to play a mournful air. Nymphalin listened with delight; it was one he had learned in her dominions.

When the air was over, the prince rose, and approaching the banqueters, despatched them on different errands; one to visit the dwarf of the Drachenfels, another to look after the grave of Musæus, and a whole detachment to puzzle the students of Heidelberg. A few launched themselves upon willow leaves on the Rhine to cruise about in the starlight, and another band set out a hunting after the gray-legged moth. The prince was left alone; and now Nymphalin, seeing the coast clear, wrapped herself up in a cloak made out of a withered leaf; and only letting her eyes glow out from the hood, she glided from the reeds, and the prince turning round, saw a dark fairy figure by his side. He drew back, a little startled, and placed his hand on his sword, when Nymphalin circling round him, sang the following words:—

THE FAIRY'S REPROACH.

I.

By the glow-worm's lamp in the dewy brake ;
By the gossamer's airy net ;
By the shifting skin of the faithless snake,
Oh, teach me to forget :
For none, ah none
Can teach so well that human spell
As thou, false one !

II.

By the fairy dance on the greensward smooth ;
By the winds of the gentle west ;
By the loving stars, when their soft looks soothe
The waves on their mother's breast,
Teach me thy lore !
By which, like withered flowers,
The leaves of buried Hours
Blossom no more !

III.

By the tent in the violet's bell ;
By the may on the scented bough ;
By the lone green isle where my sisters dwell ;
And thine own forgotten vow,
Teach me to live,
Nor feed on thoughts that pine
For love so false as thine '—
Teach me thy lore,
And one thou lov'st no more
Will bless thee and forgive !

"Surely," said Fayzenheim, faltering, "surely I know that voice !"

And Nymphalin's cloak dropped off her shoulder. "My English fairy !" and Fayzenheim knelt beside her.

I wish you had seen the fay kneel, for you would have sworn it was so like a human lover that you would never have sneered at love afterwards. Love is so fairy-like a part of us, that even a fairy cannot make it differently from us,—that is to say, when we love truly.

There was great joy in the island that night among the elves. They conducted Nymphalin to their palace within the earth, and feasted her sumptuously; and Nip told their adventures with so much spirit that he enchanted the merry foreigners. But Fayzenheim talked apart to Nymphalin, and told her how he was lord of that island, and how he had been obliged to return to his dominions by the law of his tribe, which allowed him to be absent only a certain time in every year. "But, my queen, I always intended to revisit thee next spring."

"Thou need'st not have left us so abruptly," said Nymphalin, blushing.

"But do *thou* never leave me!" said the ardent fairy; "be mine, and let our nuptials be celebrated on these shores. Wouldst thou sigh for thy green island? No! for *there* the fairy altars are deserted, the faith is gone from the land; thou art among the last of an unhonoured and expiring race. Thy mortal poets are dumb, and Fancy, which was thy priestess, sleeps hushed in her last repose. New and hard creeds have succeeded to the fairy lore. Who steals through the starlit boughs on the nights of June to watch the roundels of thy tribe? The wheels of commerce, the din of trade, have silenced to mortal ear the music of thy subjects' harps! And the noisy habitations of men, harsher than their dreaming sires, are gathering round the dell and vale where thy comrades linger: a few years, and where will be the green solitudes of England?"

The queen sighed, and the prince, perceiving that he was listened to, continued,—

"Who, in thy native shores, among the children of men, now claims the fairy's care? What cradle wouldst thou tend? On what maid wouldst thou shower thy rosy gifts? What barb wouldst thou haunt in his dreams? Poesy is fled the island, why shouldst thou linger behind? Time hath brought dull customs, that laugh at thy gentle being. Puck is buried in the harebell, he hath left no offspring, and none mourn for his loss; for night, which is the fairy season, is busy and garish as the day. What hearth is desolate after the curfew?

What house bathed in stillness at the hour in which thy revels commence? Thine empire among men hath passed from thee, and thy race are vanishing from the crowded soil; for, despite our diviner nature, our existence is linked with man's. Their neglect is our disease, their forgetfulness our death. Leave then those dull, yet troubled scenes, that are closing round the fairy rings of thy native isle. These mountains, this herbage, these gliding waves, these mouldering ruins, these starred rivulets, be they, O beautiful fairy! thy new domain. Yet in these lands our worship lingers; still can we fill the thought of the young bard, and mingle with his yearnings after the Beautiful, the Unseen. Hither come the pilgrims of the world, anxious only to gather from these scenes the legends of Us; ages will pass away ere the Rhine shall be desecrated of our haunting presence. Come then, my queen, let this palace be thine own, and the moon that glances over the shattered towers of the Dragon Rock witness our nuptials and our vows!"

In such words the fairy prince courted the young queen, and while she sighed at their truth she yielded to their charm. Oh, still may there be one spot on the earth where the fairy feet may press the legendary soil! still be there one land where the faith of The Bright Invisible hallows and inspires! Still glide thou, O majestic and solemn Rhine, among shades and valleys, from which the wisdom of belief can call the creations of the younger world!

CHAPTER XL.

WHEREIN THE READER IS MADE SPECTATOR WITH THE ENGLISH FAIRIES OF THE SCENES AND BEINGS THAT ARE BENEATH THE EARTH.

DURING the heat of next day's noon, Fayzenheim took the English visitors through the cool caverns that wind amidst the mountains of the Rhine. There, a thousand wonders

awaited the eyes of the fairy queen. I speak not of the Gothic arch and aisle into which the hollow earth forms itself, or the stream that rushes with a mighty voice through the dark chasm, or the silver columns that shoot aloft, worked by the gnomes from the mines of the mountains of Taunus; but of the strange inhabitants that from time to time they came upon. They found in one solitary cell, lined with dried moss, two misshapen elves, of a larger size than common, with a plebeian working-day aspect, who were chatting noisily together, and making a pair of boots: these were the Hausmannen or domestic elves, that dance into tradesmen's houses of a night, and play all sorts of undignified tricks. They were very civil to the queen, for they are good-natured creatures on the whole, and once had many relations in Scotland. They then, following the course of a noisy rivulet, came to a hole from which the sharp head of a fox peeped out. The queen was frightened. "Oh, come on," said the fox, encouragingly, "I am one of the fairy race, and many are the gambols we of the brute-elves play in the German world of romance." "Indeed, Mr. Fox," said the prince, "you only speak the truth; and how is Mr. Bruin?" "Quite well, my prince, but tired of his seclusion; for indeed our race can do little or nothing now in the world; and lie here in our old age, telling stories of the past, and recalling the exploits we did in our youth,—which, madam, you may see in all the fairy histories in the prince's library."

"Your own love adventures, for instance, Master Fox," said the prince.

The fox snarled angrily, and drew in his head.

"You have displeased your friend," said Nymphalin.

"Yes; he likes no allusions to the amorous follies of his youth. Did you ever hear of his rivalry with the dog for the cat's good graces?"

"No; that must be very amusing."

"Well, my queen, when we rest by and by, I will relate to you the history of the fox's wooing."

The next place they came to was a vast Runic cavern, covered with dark inscriptions of a forgotten tongue; and sitting

on a huge stone they found a dwarf with long yellow hair, his head leaning on his breast, and absorbed in meditation.

"This is a spirit of a wise and powerful race," whispered Fayzenheim, "that has often battled with the fairies; but he is of the kindly tribe."

Then the dwarf lifted his head with a mournful air; and gazed upon the bright shapes before him, lighted by the pine-torches that the prince's attendants carried.

"And what dost thou muse upon, O descendant of the race of Laurin?" said the prince.

"Upon TIME!" answered the dwarf, gloomily. "I see a River, and its waves are black, flowing from the clouds, and none knoweth its source. It rolls deeply on, aye and evermore, through a green valley, which it slowly swallows up, washing away tower and town, and vanquishing all things; and the name of the River is TIME."

Then the dwarf's head sank on his bosom, and he spoke no more.

The fairies proceeded. "Above us," said the prince, "rises one of the loftiest mountains of the Rhine; for mountains are the Dwarf's home. When the Great Spirit of all made earth, he saw that the hollows of the rocks and hills were tenantless, and yet that a mighty kingdom and great palaces were hid within them,—a dread and dark solitude, but lighted at times from the starry eyes of many jewels; and there was the treasure of the human world—gold and silver—and great heaps of gems, and a soil of metals. So God made a race for this vast empire, and gifted them with the power of thought, and the soul of exceeding wisdom, so that they want not the merri-ment and enterprise of the outer world; but musing in these dark caves is their delight. Their existence rolls away in the luxury of thought; only from time to time they appear in the world, and betoken woe or weal to men,—according to their nature, for they are divided into two tribes, the benevolent and the wrathful." While the prince spoke, they saw glaring upon them from a ledge in the upper rock a grisly face with a long matted beard. The prince gathered himself up, and frowned at the evil dwarf, for such it was; but with

a wild laugh the face abruptly disappeared, and the echo of the laugh rang with a ghastly sound through the long hollows of the earth.

The queen clung to Fayzenheim's arm. "Fear not, my queen," said he. "The evil race have no power over our light and ærial nature; with men only they war; and he whom we have seen was, in the old ages of the world, one of the deadliest visitors to mankind."

But now they came winding by a passage to a beautiful recess in the mountain empire; it was of a circular shape of amazing height; in the midst of it played a natural fountain of sparkling waters, and around it were columns of massive granite, rising in countless vistas, till lost in the distant shade. Jewels were scattered round, and brightly played the fairy torches on the gem, the fountain, and the pale silver, that gleamed at frequent intervals from the rocks. "Here let us rest," said the gallant fairy, clapping his hands; "what, ho! music and the feast."

So the feast was spread by the fountain's side; and the courtiers scattered rose-leaves, which they had brought with them, for the prince and his visitor; and amidst the dark kingdom of the dwarfs broke the delicate sound of fairy lutes. "We have not these evil beings in England," said the queen, as low as she could speak; "they rouse my fear, but my interest also. Tell me, dear prince, of what nature was the intercourse of the evil dwarf with man?"

"You know," answered the prince, "that to every species of living thing there is something in common; the vast chain of sympathy runs through all creation. By that which they have in common with the beast of the field or the bird of the air, men govern the inferior tribes; they appeal to the common passions of fear and emulation when they tame the wild steed, to the common desire of greed and gain when they snare the fishes of the stream, or allure the wolves to the pit-fall by the bleating of the lamb. In their turn, in the older ages of the world, it was by the passions which men had in common with the demon race that the fiends commanded or allured them. The dwarf whom you saw, being of that race

which is characterized by the ambition of power and the desire of hoarding, appealed then in his intercourse with men to the same characteristics in their own bosoms,—to ambition or to avarice. And thus were his victims made! But, now, dearest Nymphalin,” continued the prince, with a more lively air,—“not now will we speak of those gloomy beings. Ho, there! cease the music, and come hither all of ye, to listen to a faithful and homely history of the Dog, the Cat, the Griffin, and the Fox.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOOING OF MASTER FOX.¹

You are aware, my dear Nymphalin, that in the time of which I am about to speak there was no particular enmity between the various species of brutes; the dog and the hare chatted very agreeably together, and all the world knows that the wolf, unacquainted with mutton, had a particular affection for the lamb. In these happy days, two most respectable cats, of very old family, had an only daughter. Never was kitten more amiable or more seducing; as she grew up she manifested so many charms, that in a little while she became noted as the greatest beauty in the neighbourhood. Need I to you, dearest Nymphalin, describe her perfection? Suffice it to say that her skin was of the most delicate tortoiseshell,

¹ In the excursions of the fairies, it is the object of the author to bring before the reader a rapid phantasmagoria of the various beings that belong to the German superstitions, so that the work may thus describe the outer and the inner world of the land of the Rhine. The tale of the Fox's Wooing has been composed to give the English reader an idea of a species of novel not naturalized amongst us, though frequent among the legends of our Irish neighbours; in which the brutes are the only characters drawn,—drawn too with shades of distinction as nice and subtle as if they were the creatures of the civilized world.

that her paws were smoother than velvet, that her whiskers were twelve inches long at the least, and that her eyes had a gentleness altogether astonishing in a cat. But if the young beauty had suitors in plenty during the lives of monsieur and madame, you may suppose the number was not diminished when, at the age of two years and a half, she was left an orphan, and sole heiress to all the hereditary property. In fine, she was the richest marriage in the whole country. Without troubling you, dearest queen, with the adventures of the rest of her lovers, with their suit and their rejection, I come at once to the two rivals most sanguine of success,— the dog and the fox.

Now the dog was a handsome, honest, straightforward, affectionate fellow. "For my part," said he, "I don't wonder at my cousin's refusing Bruin the bear, and Gauntgrim the wolf: to be sure they give themselves great airs, and call themselves '*noble*,' but what then? Bruin is always in the sulks, and Gauntgrim always in a passion; a cat of any sensibility would lead a miserable life with them. As for me, I am very good-tempered when I'm not put out, and I have no fault except that of being angry if disturbed at my meals. I am young and good-looking, fond of play and amusement, and altogether as agreeable a husband as a cat could find in a summer's day. If she marries me, well and good; she may have her property settled on herself: if not, I shall bear her no malice; and I hope I sha'n't be too much in love to forget that there are other cats in the world."

With that the dog threw his tail over his back, and set off to his mistress with a gay face on the matter.

Now the fox heard the dog talking thus to himself,— for the fox was always peeping about, in holes and corners, and he burst out a laughing when the dog was out of sight.

"Ho, ho, my fine fellow!" said he; "not so fast, if you please: you've got the fox for a rival, let me tell you."

The fox, as you very well know, is a beast that can never do anything without a manoeuvre; and as, from his cunning, he was generally very lucky in anything he undertook, he did

not doubt for a moment that he should put the dog's nose out of joint. Reynard was aware that in love one should always, if possible, be the first in the field; and he therefore resolved to get the start of the dog and arrive before him at the cat's residence. But this was no easy matter; for though Reynard could run faster than the dog for a little way, he was no match for him in a journey of some distance. "However," said Reynard, "those good-natured creatures are never very wise; and I think I know already what will make him bait on his way."

With that, the fox trotted pretty fast by a short cut in the woods, and getting before the dog, laid himself down by a hole in the earth, and began to howl most piteously.

The dog, hearing the noise, was very much alarmed. "See now," said he, "if the poor fox has not got himself into some scrape! Those cunning creatures are always in mischief; thank Heaven, it never comes into my head to be cunning!" And the good-natured animal ran off as hard as he could to see what was the matter with the fox.

"Oh, dear!" cried Reynard; "what shall I do? What shall I do? My poor little sister has fallen into this hole, and I can't get her out; she'll certainly be smothered." And the fox burst out a howling more piteously than before.

"But, my dear Reynard," quoth the dog, very simply, "why don't you go in after your sister?"

"Ah, you may well ask that," said the fox; "but, in trying to get in, don't you perceive that I have sprained my back and can't stir? Oh, dear! what shall I do if my poor little sister is smothered!"

"Pray don't vex yourself," said the dog; "I'll get her out in an instant." And with that he forced himself with great difficulty into the hole.

Now, no sooner did the fox see that the dog was fairly in, than he rolled a great stone to the mouth of the hole and fitted it so tight, that the dog, not being able to turn round and scratch against it with his forepaws, was made a close prisoner.

"Ha, ha!" cried Reynard, laughing outside; "amuse your-

self with my poor little sister, while I go and make your compliments to Mademoiselle the Cat."

With that Reynard set off at an easy pace, never troubling his head what became of the poor dog. When he arrived in the neighbourhood of the beautiful cat's mansion, he resolved to pay a visit to a friend of his, an old magpie that lived in a tree and was well acquainted with all the news of the place. "For," thought Reynard, "I may as well know the blind side of my mistress that is to be, and get round it at once."

The magpie received the fox with great cordiality, and inquired what brought him so great a distance from home.

"Upon my word," said the fox, "nothing so much as the pleasure of seeing your ladyship and hearing those agreeable anecdotes you tell with so charming a grace; but to let you into a secret — be sure it don't go further —"

"On the word of a magpie," interrupted the bird.

"Pardon me for doubting you," continued the fox; "I should have recollected that a pie was a proverb for discretion. But, as I was saying, you know her Majesty the lioness?"

"Surely," said the magpie, bridling.

"Well; she was pleased to fall in — that is to say — to — to — take a caprice to your humble servant, and the lion grew so jealous that I thought it prudent to decamp. A jealous lion is no joke, let me assure your ladyship. But mum's the word."

So great a piece of news delighted the magpie. She could not but repay it in kind, by all the news in her budget. She told the fox all the scandal about Bruin and Gauntgrim, and she then fell to work on the poor young cat. She did not spare her foibles, you may be quite sure. The fox listened with great attention, and he learned enough to convince him that however much the magpie might exaggerate, the cat was very susceptible to flattery, and had a great deal of imagination.

When the magpie had finished she said, "But it must be very unfortunate for you to be banished from so magnificent a court as that of the lion?"

"As to that," answered the fox, "I console myself for my

exile with a present his Majesty made me on parting, as a reward for my anxiety for his honour and domestic tranquillity; namely, three hairs from the fifth leg of the amoronthologosphorus. Only think of that, ma'am!"

"The what?" cried the pie, cocking down her left ear.

"The amoronthologosphorus."

"La!" said the magpie; "and what is that very long word, my dear Reynard?"

"The amoronthologosphorus is a beast that lives on the other side of the river Cylinx; it has five legs, and on the fifth leg there are three hairs, and whoever has those three hairs can be young and beautiful forever."

"Bless me! I wish you would let me see them," said the pie, holding out her claw.

"Would that I could oblige you, ma'am; but it's as much as my life's worth to show them to any but the lady I marry. In fact, they only have an effect on the fair sex, as you may see by myself, whose poor person they utterly fail to improve: they are, therefore, intended for a marriage present, and his Majesty the lion thus generously atoned to me for relinquishing the tenderness of his queen. One must confess that there was a great deal of delicacy in the gift. But you'll be sure not to mention it."

"A magpie gossip indeed!" quoth the old blab.

The fox then wished the magpie good night, and retired to a hole to sleep off the fatigues of the day, before he presented himself to the beautiful young cat.

The next morning, Heaven knows how! it was all over the place that Reynard the fox had been banished from court for the favour shown him by her Majesty, and that the lion had bribed his departure with three hairs that would make any lady whom the fox married young and beautiful forever.

The cat was the first to learn the news, and she became all curiosity to see so interesting a stranger, possessed of "qualifications" which, in the language of the day, "would render any animal happy!" She was not long without obtaining her wish. As she was taking a walk in the wood the fox contrived to encounter her. You may be sure that he made her

his best bow; and he flattered the poor cat with so courtly an air that she saw nothing surprising in the love of the lioness.

Meanwhile let us see what became of his rival, the dog.

"Ah, the poor creature!" said Nymphalin; "it is easy to guess that he need not be buried alive to lose all chance of marrying the heiress."

"Wait till the end," answered Fayzenheim.

When the dog found that he was thus entrapped, he gave himself up for lost. In vain he kicked with his hind-legs against the stone,—he only succeeded in bruising his paws; and at length he was forced to lie down, with his tongue out of his mouth, and quite exhausted. "However," said he, after he had taken breath, "it won't do to be starved here, without doing my best to escape; and if I can't get out one way, let me see if there is not a hole at the other end." Thus saying, his courage, which stood him in lieu of cunning, returned, and he proceeded on in the same straightforward way in which he always conducted himself. At first the path was exceedingly narrow, and he hurt his sides very much against the rough stones that projected from the earth; but by degrees the way became broader, and he now went on with considerable ease to himself, till he arrived in a large cavern, where he saw an immense griffin sitting on his tail, and smoking a huge pipe.

The dog was by no means pleased at meeting so suddenly a creature that had only to open his mouth to swallow him up at a morsel; however, he put a bold face on the danger, and walking respectfully up to the griffin, said, "Sir, I should be very much obliged to you if you would inform me the way out of these holes into the upper world."

The griffin took the pipe out of his mouth, and looked at the dog very sternly.

"Ho, wretch!" said he, "how comest thou hither? I suppose thou wantest to steal my treasure; but I know how to treat such vagabonds as you, and I shall certainly eat you up."

"You can do that if you choose," said the dog; "but it would be very unhandsome conduct in an animal so much bigger than myself. For my own part, I never attack any

dog that is not of equal size,—I should be ashamed of myself if I did. And as to your treasure, the character I bear for honesty is too well known to merit such a suspicion.”

“Upon my word,” said the griffin, who could not help smiling for the life of him, “you have a singularly free mode of expressing yourself. And how, I say, came you hither?”

Then the dog, who did not know what a lie was, told the griffin his whole history,—how he had set off to pay his court to the cat, and how Reynard the fox had entrapped him into the hole.

When he had finished, the griffin said to him, “I see, my friend, that you know how to speak the truth; I am in want of just such a servant as you will make me, therefore stay with me and keep watch over my treasure when I sleep.”

“Two words to that,” said the dog. “You have hurt my feelings very much by suspecting my honesty, and I would much sooner go back into the wood and be avenged on that scoundrel the fox, than serve a master who has so ill an opinion of me. I pray you, therefore, to dismiss me, and to put me in the right way to my cousin the cat.”

“I am not a griffin of many words,” answered the master of the cavern, “and I give you your choice,—be my servant or be my breakfast; it is just the same to me. I give you time to decide till I have smoked out my pipe.”

The poor dog did not take so long to consider. “It is true,” thought he, “that it is a great misfortune to live in a cave with a griffin of so unpleasant a countenance; but, probably, if I serve him well and faithfully, he’ll take pity on me some day, and let me go back to earth, and prove to my cousin what a rogue the fox is; and as to the rest, though I would sell my life as dear as I could, it is impossible to fight a griffin with a mouth of so monstrous a size.” In short, he decided to stay with the griffin.

“Shake a paw on it,” quoth the grim smoker; and the dog shook paws.

“And now,” said the griffin, “I will tell you what you are to do. Look here,” and moving his tail, he showed the dog a great heap of gold and silver, in a hole in the ground, that

he had covered with the folds of his tail; and also, what the dog thought more valuable, a great heap of bones of very tempting appearance. "Now," said the griffin, "during the day I can take very good care of these myself; but at night it is very necessary that I should go to sleep, so when I sleep you must watch over them instead of me."

"Very well," said the dog. "As to the gold and silver, I have no objection; but I would much rather that you would lock up the bones, for I'm often hungry of a night, and —"

"Hold your tongue," said the griffin.

"But, sir," said the dog, after a short silence, "surely nobody ever comes into so retired a situation! Who are the thieves, if I may make bold to ask?"

"Know," answered the griffin, "that there are a great many serpents in this neighbourhood. They are always trying to steal my treasure; and if they catch me napping, they, not contented with theft, would do their best to sting me to death. So that I am almost worn out for want of sleep."

"Ah," quoth the dog, who was fond of a good night's rest, "I don't envy you your treasure, sir."

At night, the griffin, who had a great deal of penetration, and saw that he might depend on the dog, lay down to sleep in another corner of the cave; and the dog, shaking himself well, so as to be quite awake, took watch over the treasure. His mouth watered exceedingly at the bones, and he could not help smelling them now and then; but he said to himself, "A bargain's a bargain, and since I have promised to serve the griffin, I must serve him as an honest dog ought to serve."

In the middle of the night he saw a great snake creeping in by the side of the cave; but the dog set up so loud a bark that the griffin awoke, and the snake crept away as fast as he could. Then the griffin was very much pleased, and he gave the dog one of the bones to amuse himself with; and every night the dog watched the treasure, and acquitted himself so well that not a snake, at last, dared to make its appearance, — so the griffin enjoyed an excellent night's rest.

The dog now found himself much more comfortable than he

expected. The griffin regularly gave him one of the bones for supper; and, pleased with his fidelity, made himself as agreeable a master as a griffin could be. Still, however, the dog was secretly very anxious to return to earth; for having nothing to do during the day but to doze on the ground, he dreamed perpetually of his cousin the cat's charms, and, in fancy, he gave the rascal Reynard as hearty a worry as a fox may well have the honour of receiving from a dog's paws. He awoke panting; alas! he could not realize his dreams.

One night, as he was watching as usual over the treasure, he was greatly surprised to see a beautiful little black and white dog enter the cave; and it came fawning to our honest friend, wagging its tail with pleasure.

"Ah, little one," said our dog, whom, to distinguish, I will call the watch-dog, "you had better make the best of your way back again. See, there is a great griffin asleep in the other corner of the cave, and if he wakes, he will either eat you up or make you his servant, as he has made me."

"I know what you would tell me," says the little dog; "and I have come down here to deliver you. The stone is now gone from the mouth of the cave, and you have nothing to do but to go back with me. Come, brother, come."

The dog was very much excited by this address. "Don't ask me, my dear little friend," said he; "you must be aware that I should be too happy to escape out of this cold cave, and roll on the soft turf once more: but if I leave my master, the griffin, those cursed serpents, who are always on the watch, will come in and steal his treasure,—nay, perhaps, sting him to death." Then the little dog came up to the watch-dog, and remonstrated with him greatly, and licked him caressingly on both sides of his face; and, taking him by the ear, endeavoured to draw him from the treasure: but the dog would not stir a step, though his heart sorely pressed him. At length the little dog, finding it all in vain, said, "Well, then, if I must leave, good-by; but I have become so hungry in coming down all this way after you, that I wish you would give me one of those bones; they smell very pleasantly, and one out of so many could never be missed."

"Alas!" said the watch-dog, with tears in his eyes, "how unlucky I am to have eaten up the bone my master gave me, otherwise you should have had it and welcome. But I can't give you one of these, because my master has made me promise to watch over them all, and I have given him my paw on it. I am sure a dog of your respectable appearance will say nothing further on the subject."

Then the little dog answered pettishly, "Pooh, what nonsense you talk! surely a great griffin can't miss a little bone fit for me?" and nestling his nose under the watch-dog, he tried forthwith to bring up one of the bones.

On this the watch-dog grew angry, and, though with much reluctance, he seized the little dog by the nape of the neck and threw him off, but without hurting him. Suddenly the little dog changed into a monstrous serpent, bigger even than the griffin himself, and the watch-dog barked with all his might. The griffin rose in a great hurry, and the serpent sprang upon him ere he was well awake. I wish, dearest Nymphalin, you could have seen the battle between the griffin and the serpent,—how they coiled and twisted, and bit and darted their fiery tongues at each other. At length the serpent got uppermost, and was about to plunge his tongue into that part of the griffin which is unprotected by his scales, when the dog, seizing him by the tail, bit him so sharply that he could not help turning round to kill his new assailant, and the griffin, taking advantage of the opportunity, caught the serpent by the throat with both claws, and fairly strangled him. As soon as the griffin had recovered from the nervousness of the conflict, he heaped all manner of caresses on the dog for saving his life. The dog told him the whole story, and the griffin then explained that the dead snake was the king of the serpents, who had the power to change himself into any shape he pleased. "If he had tempted you," said he, "to leave the treasure but for one moment, or to have given him any part of it, ay, but a single bone, he would have crushed you in an instant, and stung me to death ere I could have waked; but none, no, not the most venomous thing in creation, has power to hurt the honest!"

"That has always been my belief," answered the dog; "and now, sir, you had better go to sleep again and leave the rest to me."

"Nay," answered the griffin, "I have no longer need of a servant; for now that the king of the serpents is dead, the rest will never molest me. It was only to satisfy his avarice that his subjects dared to brave the den of the griffin."

Upon hearing this the dog was exceedingly delighted; and raising himself on his hind paws, he begged the griffin most movingly to let him return to earth, to visit his mistress the cat, and worry his rival the fox.

"You do not serve an ungrateful master," answered the griffin. "You shall return, and I will teach you all the craft of our race, which is much craftier than the race of that pettifogger the fox, so that you may be able to cope with your rival."

"Ah, excuse me," said the dog, hastily, "I am equally obliged to you; but I fancy honesty is a match for cunning any day, and I think myself a great deal safer in being a dog of honour than if I knew all the tricks in the world."

"Well," said the griffin, a little piqued at the dog's bluntness, "do as you please; I wish you all possible success."

Then the griffin opened a secret door in the side of the cabin, and the dog saw a broad path that led at once into the wood. He thanked the griffin with all his heart, and ran wagging his tail into the open moonlight. "Ah, ah, master fox," said he, "there's no trap for an honest dog that has not two doors to it, cunning as you think yourself."

With that he curled his tail gallantly over his left leg, and set off on a long trot to the cat's house. When he was within sight of it, he stopped to refresh himself by a pool of water, and who should be there but our friend the magpie.

"And what do *you* want, friend?" said she, rather disdainfully, for the dog looked somewhat out of case after his journey.

"I am going to see my cousin the cat," answered he.

"*Your* cousin! marry come up," said the magpie; "don't you know she is going to be married to Reynard the fox?"

This is not a time for her to receive the visits of a brute like you."

These words put the dog in such a passion that he very nearly bit the magpie for her uncivil mode of communicating such bad news. However, he curbed his temper, and, without answering her, went at once to the cat's residence.

The cat was sitting at the window, and no sooner did the dog see her than he fairly lost his heart; never had he seen so charming a cat before. He advanced, wagging his tail, and with his most insinuating air, when the cat, getting up, clapped the window in his face, and lo! Reynard the fox appeared in her stead.

"Come out, thou rascal!" said the dog, showing his teeth; "come out, I challenge thee to single combat; I have not forgiven thy malice, and thou seest that I am no longer shut up in the cave, and unable to punish thee for thy wickedness."

"Go home, silly one!" answered the fox, sneering; "thou hast no business here, and as for fighting thee — bah!" Then the fox left the window and disappeared. But the dog, thoroughly enraged, scratched lustily at the door, and made such a noise, that presently the cat herself came to the window.

"How now!" said she, angrily; "what means all this rudeness? Who are you, and what do you want at my house?"

"Oh, my dear cousin," said the dog, "do not speak so severely. Know that I have come here on purpose to pay you a visit; and, whatever you do, let me beseech you not to listen to that villain Reynard, — you have no conception what a rogue he is!"

"What!" said the cat, blushing; "do you dare to abuse your betters in this fashion? I see you have a design on me. Go, this instant, or —"

"Enough, madam," said the dog, proudly; "you need not speak twice to me, — farewell."

And he turned away very slowly, and went under a tree, where he took up his lodgings for the night. But the next morning there was an amazing commotion in the neighbourhood; a stranger, of a very different style of travelling from that of the dog, had arrived at the dead of the night, and

fixed his abode in a large cavern hollowed out of a steep rock. The noise he had made in flying through the air was so great that it had awakened every bird and beast in the parish; and Reynard, whose bad conscience never suffered him to sleep very soundly, putting his head out of the window, perceived, to his great alarm, that the stranger was nothing less than a monstrous griffin.

Now the griffins are the richest beasts in the world; and that's the reason they keep so close under ground. Whenever it does happen that they pay a visit above, it is not a thing to be easily forgotten.

The magpie was all agitation. What could the griffin possibly want there? She resolved to take a peep at the cavern, and accordingly she hopped timorously up the rock, and pretended to be picking up sticks for her nest.

"Holla, ma'am!" cried a very rough voice, and she saw the griffin putting his head out of the cavern. "Holla! you are the very lady I want to see; you know all the people about here, eh?"

"All the best company, your lordship, I certainly do," answered the magpie, dropping a courtesy.

Upon this the griffin walked out; and smoking his pipe leisurely in the open air, in order to set the pie at her ease, continued,—

"Are there any respectable beasts of good families settled in this neighbourhood?"

"Oh, most elegant society, I assure your lordship," cried the pie. "I have lived here myself these ten years, and the great heiress, the cat yonder, attracts a vast number of strangers."

"Humph! heiress, indeed! much *you* know about heiresses!" said the griffin. "There is only one heiress in the world, and that's my daughter."

"Bless me! has your lordship a family? I beg you a thousand pardons; but I only saw your lordship's own equipage last night, and did not know you brought any one with you."

"My daughter went first, and was safely lodged before I arrived. She did not disturb you, I dare say, as I did; for

she sails along like a swan: but I have got the gout in my left claw, and that's the reason I puff and groan so in taking a journey."

"Shall I drop in upon Miss Griffin, and see how she is after her journey?" said the pie, advancing.

"I thank you, no. I don't intend her to be seen while I stay here,—it unsettles her; and I'm afraid of the young beasts running away with her if they once heard how handsome she was: she's the living picture of me, but she's monstrous giddy! Not that I should care much if she did go off with a beast of degree, were I not obliged to pay her portion, which is prodigious; and I don't like parting with money, ma'am, when I've once got it. Ho, ho, ho!"

"You are too witty, my lord. But if you refused your consent?" said the pie, anxious to know the whole family history of so grand a seigneur.

"I should have to pay the dowry all the same. It was left her by her uncle the dragon. But don't let this go any further."

"Your lordship may depend on my secrecy. I wish your lordship a very good morning."

Away flew the pie, and she did not stop till she got to the cat's house. The cat and the fox were at breakfast, and the fox had his paw on his heart. "Beautiful scene!" cried the pie; the cat coloured, and bade the pie take a seat.

Then off went the pie's tongue, glib, glib, glib, chatter, chatter, chatter. She related to them the whole story of the griffin and his daughter, and a great deal more besides, that the griffin had never told her.

The cat listened attentively. Another young heiress in the neighbourhood might be a formidable rival. "But is this griffiness handsome?" said she.

"Handsome!" cried the pie; "oh, if you could have seen the father!—such a mouth, such eyes, such a complexion; and he declares she's the living picture of himself! But what do you say, Mr. Reynard,—you, who have been so much in the world, have, perhaps, seen the young lady?"

"Why, I can't say I have," answered the fox, waking from

a reverie; "but she must be wonderfully rich. I dare say that fool the dog will be making up to her."

"Ah, by the way," said the pie, "what a fuss he made at your door yesterday; why would you not admit him, my dear?"

"Oh," said the cat, demurely, "Mr. Reynard says that he is a dog of very bad character, quite a fortune-hunter; and hiding the most dangerous disposition to bite under an appearance of good nature. I hope he won't be quarrelsome with you, dear Reynard!"

"With me? Oh, the poor wretch, no! — he might bluster a little; but he knows that if I'm once angry I'm a devil at biting; — one should not boast of oneself."

In the evening Reynard felt a strange desire to go and see the griffin smoking his pipe; but what could he do? There was the dog under the opposite tree evidently watching for him, and Reynard had no wish to prove himself that devil at biting which he declared he was. At last he resolved to have recourse to stratagem to get rid of the dog.

A young buck of a rabbit, a sort of provincial fop, had looked in upon his cousin the cat, to pay her his respects, and Reynard, taking him aside, said, "You see that shabby-looking dog under the tree? He has behaved very ill to your cousin the cat, and you certainly ought to challenge him. Forgive my boldness, nothing but respect for your character induces me to take so great a liberty; you know I would chastise the rascal myself, but what a scandal it would make! If I were already married to your cousin, it would be a different thing. But you know what a story that cursed magpie would hatch out of it!"

The rabbit looked very foolish; he assured the fox he was no match for the dog; that he was very fond of his cousin, to be sure! but he saw no necessity to interfere with her domestic affairs; and, in short, he tried all he possibly could to get out of the scrape; but the fox so artfully played on his vanity, so earnestly assured him that the dog was the biggest coward in the world and would make a humble apology, and so eloquently represented to him the glory he would obtain for

manifesting so much spirit, that at length the rabbit was persuaded to go out and deliver the challenge.

"I'll be your second," said the fox; "and the great field on the other side the wood, two miles hence, shall be the place of battle: there we shall be out of observation. You go first, I'll follow in half an hour; and I say, hark! — in case he does accept the challenge, and you feel the least afraid, I'll be in the field, and take it off your paws with the utmost pleasure; rely on *me*, my dear sir!"

Away went the rabbit. The dog was a little astonished at the temerity of the poor creature; but on hearing that the fox was to be present, willingly consented to repair to the place of conflict. This readiness the rabbit did not at all relish; he went very slowly to the field, and seeing no fox there, his heart misgave him; and while the dog was putting his nose to the ground to try if he could track the coming of the fox, the rabbit slipped into a burrow, and left the dog to walk back again.

Meanwhile the fox was already at the rock; he walked very soft-footedly, and looked about with extreme caution, for he had a vague notion that a griffin-papa would not be very civil to foxes.

Now there were two holes in the rock,—one below, one above, an upper story and an under; and while the fox was peering about, he saw a great claw from the upper rock beckoning to him.

"Ah, ah!" said the fox, "that's the wanton young griffin-ess, I'll swear."

He approached, and a voice said,—

"Charming Mr. Reynard, do you not think you could deliver an unfortunate griffiness from a barbarous confinement in this rock?"

"Oh, heavens!" cried the fox, tenderly, "what a beautiful voice! and, ah, my poor heart, what a lovely claw! Is it possible that I hear the daughter of my lord, the great griffin?"

"Hush, flatterer! not so loud, if you please. My father is taking an evening stroll, and is very quick of hearing. He has tied me up by my poor wings in the cavern, for he is

mightily afraid of some beast running away with me. You know I have all my fortune settled on myself."

"Talk not of fortune," said the fox; "but how can I deliver you? Shall I enter and gnaw the cord?"

"Alas!" answered the griffiness, "it is an immense chain I am bound with. However, you may come in and talk more at your ease."

The fox peeped cautiously all round, and seeing no sign of the griffin, he entered the lower cave and stole upstairs to the upper story; but as he went on, he saw immense piles of jewels and gold, and all sorts of treasure, so that the old griffin might well have laughed at the poor cat being called an heiress. The fox was greatly pleased at such indisputable signs of wealth, and he entered the upper cave, resolved to be transported with the charms of the griffiness.

There was, however, a great chasm between the landing-place and the spot where the young lady was chained, and he found it impossible to pass; the cavern was very dark, but he saw enough of the figure of the griffiness to perceive, in spite of her petticoat, that she was the image of her father, and the most hideous heiress that the earth ever saw!

However, he swallowed his disgust, and poured forth such a heap of compliments that the griffiness appeared entirely won.

He implored her to fly with him the first moment she was unchained.

"That is impossible," said she; "for my father never unchains me except in his presence, and then I cannot stir out of his sight."

"The wretch!" cried Reynard, "what is to be done?"

"Why, there is only one thing I know of," answered the griffiness, "which is this: I always make his soup for him, and if I could mix something in it that would put him fast to sleep before he had time to chain me up again I might slip down and carry off all the treasure below on my back."

"Charming!" exclaimed Reynard; "what invention! what wit! I will go and get some poppies directly."

"Alas!" said the griffiness, "poppies have no effect upon

griffins. The only thing that can ever put my father fast to sleep is a nice young cat boiled up in his soup; it is astonishing what a charm that has upon him! But where to get a cat? — it must be a maiden cat too!”

Reynard was a little startled at so singular an opiate. “But,” thought he, “griffins are not like the rest of the world, and so rich an heiress is not to be won by ordinary means.”

“I do know a cat,—a maiden cat,” said he, after a short pause; “but I feel a little repugnance at the thought of having her boiled in the griffin’s soup. Would not a dog do as well?”

“Ah, base thing!” said the griffiness, appearing to weep; “you are in love with the cat, I see it; go and marry her, poor dwarf that she is, and leave me to die of grief.”

In vain the fox protested that he did not care a straw for the cat; nothing could now appease the griffiness but his positive assurance that come what would poor puss should be brought to the cave and boiled for the griffin’s soup.

“But how will you get her here?” said the griffiness.

“Ah, leave that to me,” said Reynard. “Only put a basket out of the window and draw it up by a cord; the moment it arrives at the window, be sure to clap your claw on the cat at once, for she is terribly active.”

“Tush!” answered the heiress; “a pretty griffiness I should be if I did not know how to catch a cat!”

“But this must be when your father is out?” said Reynard.

“Certainly; he takes a stroll every evening at sunset.”

“Let it be to-morrow, then,” said Reynard, impatient for the treasure.

This being arranged, Reynard thought it time to decamp. He stole down the stairs again, and tried to filch some of the treasure by the way; but it was too heavy for him to carry, and he was forced to acknowledge to himself that it was impossible to get the treasure without taking the griffiness (whose back seemed prodigiously strong) into the bargain.

He returned home to the cat, and when he entered her house, and saw how ordinary everything looked after the jewels in

the griffin's cave, he quite wondered how he had ever thought the cat had the least pretensions to good looks. However, he concealed his wicked design, and his mistress thought he had never appeared so amiable.

"Only guess," said he, "where I have been!—to our new neighbour the griffin; a most charming person, thoroughly affable, and quite the air of the court. As for that silly magpie, the griffin saw her character at once; and it was all a hoax about his daughter,—he has no daughter at all. You know, my dear, hoaxing is a fashionable amusement among the great. He says he has heard of nothing but your beauty, and on my telling him we were going to be married, he has insisted upon giving a great ball and supper in honour of the event. In fact, he is a gallant old fellow, and dying to see you. Of course, I was obliged to accept the invitation."

"You could not do otherwise," said the unsuspecting young creature, who, as I before said, was very susceptible to flattery.

"And only think how delicate his attentions are," said the fox. "As he is very badly lodged for a beast of his rank, and his treasure takes up the whole of the ground floor, he is forced to give the *fête* in the upper story, so he hangs out a basket for his guests, and draws them up with his own claw. How condescending! But the great *are* so amiable!"

The cat, brought up in seclusion, was all delight at the idea of seeing such high life, and the lovers talked of nothing else all the next day,—when Reynard, towards evening, putting his head out of the window, saw his old friend the dog lying as usual and watching him very grimly. "Ah, that cursed creature! I had quite forgotten him; what is to be done now? He would make no bones of me if he once saw me set foot out of doors."

With that, the fox began to cast in his head how he should get rid of his rival, and at length he resolved on a very notable project; he desired the cat to set out first, and wait for him at a turn in the road a little way off. "For," said he, "if we go together we shall certainly be insulted by the dog; and he will know that in the presence of a lady, the custom

of a beast of my fashion will not suffer me to avenge the affront. But when I am alone, the creature is such a coward that he will not dare say his soul's his own; leave the door open and I'll follow immediately."

The cat's mind was so completely poisoned against her cousin that she implicitly believed this account of his character; and accordingly, with many recommendations to her lover not to sully his dignity by getting into any sort of quarrel with the dog, she set off first.

The dog went up to her very humbly, and begged her to allow him to say a few words to her; but she received him so haughtily, that his spirit was up; and he walked back to the tree more than ever enraged against his rival. But what was his joy when he saw that the cat had left the door open! "Now, wretch," thought he, "you cannot escape me!" So he walked briskly in at the back door. He was greatly surprised to find Reynard lying down in the straw, panting as if his heart would break, and rolling his eyes in the pangs of death.

"Ah, friend," said the fox, with a faltering voice, "you are avenged, my hour is come; I am just going to give up the ghost: put your paw upon mine, and say you forgive me."

Despite his anger, the generous dog could not set tooth on a dying foe.

"You have served me a shabby trick," said he; "you have left me to starve in a hole, and you have evidently maligned me with my cousin: certainly I meant to be avenged on you; but if you are really dying, that alters the affair."

"Oh, oh!" groaned the fox, very bitterly; "I am past help; the poor cat is gone for Doctor Ape, but he'll never come in time. What a thing it is to have a bad conscience on one's death-bed! But wait till the cat returns, and I'll do you full justice with her before I die."

The good-natured dog was much moved at seeing his mortal enemy in such a state, and endeavoured as well as he could to console him.

"Oh, oh!" said the fox; "I am so parched in the throat, I am burning;" and he hung his tongue out of his mouth, and rolled his eyes more fearfully than ever.

"Is there no water here?" said the dog, looking round.

"Alas, no!—yet stay! yes, now I think of it, there is some in that little hole in the wall; but how to get at it! It is so high that I can't, in my poor weak state, climb up to it; and I dare not ask such a favour of one I have injured so much."

"Don't talk of it," said the dog: "but the hole's very small, I could not put my nose through it."

"No; but if you just climb up on that stone, and thrust your paw into the hole, you can dip it into the water, and so cool my poor parched mouth. Oh, what a thing it is to have a bad conscience!"

The dog sprang upon the stone, and, getting on his hind legs, thrust his front paw into the hole; when suddenly Reynard pulled a string that he had concealed under the straw, and the dog found his paw caught tight to the wall in a running noose.

"Ah, rascal!" said he, turning round; but the fox leaped up gayly from the straw, and fastening the string with his teeth to a nail in the other end of the wall, walked out, crying, "Good-by, my dear friend; have a care how you believe hereafter in sudden conversions!" So he left the dog on his hind legs to take care of the house.

Reynard found the cat waiting for him where he had appointed, and they walked lovingly together till they came to the cave. It was now dark, and they saw the basket waiting below; the fox assisted the poor cat into it. "There is only room for one," said he, "you must go first!" Up rose the basket; the fox heard a piteous mew, and no more.

"So much for the griffin's soup!" thought he.

He waited patiently for some time, when the griffiness, waving her claw from the window, said cheerfully, "All's right, my dear Reynard; my papa has finished his soup, and sleeps as sound as a rock! All the noise in the world would not wake him now, till he has slept off the boiled cat, which won't be these twelve hours. Come and assist me in packing up the treasure; I should be sorry to leave a single diamond behind."

"So should I," quoth the fox. "Stay, I'll come round by

the lower hole: why, the door's shut! pray, beautiful griffin-ess, open it to thy impatient adorer."

"Alas, my father has hid the key! I never know where he places it. You must come up by the basket; see, I will lower it for you."

The fox was a little loth to trust himself in the same conveyance that had taken his mistress to be boiled; but the most cautious grow rash when money's to be gained, and avarice can trap even a fox. So he put himself as comfortably as he could into the basket, and up he went in an instant. It rested, however, just before it reached the window, and the fox felt, with a slight shudder, the claw of the griffiness stroking his back.

"Oh, what a beautiful coat!" quoth she, caressingly.

"You are too kind," said the fox; "but you can feel it more at your leisure when I am once up. Make haste, I beseech you."

"Oh, what a beautiful bushy tail! Never did I feel such a tail."

"It is entirely at your service, sweet griffiness," said the fox; "but pray let me in. Why lose an instant?"

"No, never did I feel such a tail! No wonder you are so successful with the ladies."

"Ah, beloved griffiness, my tail is yours to eternity, but you pinch it a little too hard."

Scarcely had he said this, when down dropped the basket, but not with the fox in it; he found himself caught by the tail, and dangling half way down the rock, by the help of the very same sort of pulley wherewith he had snared the dog. I leave you to guess his consternation; he yelped out as loud as he could,—for it hurts a fox exceedingly to be hanged by his tail with his head downwards,—when the door of the rock opened, and out stalked the griffin himself, smoking his pipe, with a vast crowd of all the fashionable beasts in the neighbourhood.

"Oho, brother," said the bear, laughing fit to kill himself; "who ever saw a fox hanged by the tail before?"

"You'll have need of a physician," quoth Doctor Ape.

"A pretty match, indeed; a griffiness for such a creature as you!" said the goat, strutting by him.

The fox grinned with pain, and said nothing. But that which hurt him most was the compassion of a dull fool of a donkey, who assured him with great gravity that he saw nothing at all to laugh at in his situation!

"At all events," said the fox, at last, "cheated, gulled, betrayed as I am, I have played the same trick to the dog. Go and laugh at him, gentlemen; he deserves it as much as I can, I assure you."

"Pardon me," said the griffin, taking the pipe out of his mouth; "one never laughs at the honest."

"And see," said the bear, "here he is."

And indeed the dog had, after much effort, gnawed the string in two, and extricated his paw; the scent of the fox had enabled him to track his footsteps, and here he arrived, burning for vengeance and finding himself already avenged.

But his first thought was for his dear cousin. "Ah, where is she?" he cried movingly; "without doubt that villain Reynard has served her some scurvy trick."

"I fear so indeed, my old friend," answered the griffin; "but don't grieve,—after all, she was nothing particular. You shall marry my daughter the griffiness, and succeed to all the treasure; ay, and all the bones that you once guarded so faithfully."

"Talk not to me," said the faithful dog. "I want none of your treasure; and, though I don't mean to be rude, your griffiness may go to the devil. I will run over the world, but I will find my dear cousin."

"See her then," said the griffin; and the beautiful cat, more beautiful than ever, rushed out of the cavern, and threw herself into the dog's paws.

A pleasant scene this for the fox! He had skill enough in the female heart to know that it may excuse many little infidelities, but to be boiled alive for a griffin's soup — no, the offence was inexpiable.

"You understand me, Mr. Reynard," said the griffin, "I have no daughter, and it was me you made love to. Know

ing what sort of a creature a magpie is, I amused myself with hoaxing her,—the fashionable amusement at court, you know."

The fox made a mighty struggle, and leaped on the ground, leaving his tail behind him. It did not grow again in a hurry.

"See," said the griffin, as the beasts all laughed at the figure Reynard made running into the wood, "the dog beats the fox with the ladies, after all; and cunning as he is in everything else, the fox is the last creature that should ever think of making love!"

"Charming!" cried Nymphalin, clasping her hands; "it is just the sort of story I like."

"And I suppose, sir," said Nip, pertly, "that the dog and the cat lived very happily ever afterwards? Indeed the nuptial felicity of a dog and cat is proverbial!"

"I dare say they lived much the same as any other married couple," answered the prince.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TOMB OF A FATHER OF MANY CHILDREN.

THE feast being now ended, as well as the story, the fairies wound their way homeward by a different path, till at length a red steady light glowed through the long basaltic arches upon them, like the Demon Hunters' fires in the Forest of Pines.

The prince sobered in his pace. "You approach," said he, in a grave tone, "the greatest of our temples; you will witness the tomb of a mighty founder of our race!" An awe crept over the queen, in spite of herself. Tracking the fires in silence, they came to a vast space, in the midst of which was a long gray block of stone, such as the traveller finds amidst the dread silence of Egyptian Thebes.

And on this stone lay the gigantic figure of a man,—dead, but not death-like, for invisible spells had preserved the flesh and the long hair for untold ages; and beside him lay a rude instrument of music, and at his feet was a sword and a hunter's spear; and above, the rock wound, hollowed and roofless, to the upper air, and daylight came through, sickened and pale, beneath red fires that burned everlastingly around him, on such simple altars as belong to a savage race. But the place was not solitary, for many motionless but not lifeless shapes sat on large blocks of stone beside the tomb. There was the wizard, wrapped in his long black mantle, and his face covered with his hands; there was the uncouth and deformed dwarf, gibbering to himself; there sat the household elf; there glowered from a gloomy rent in the wall, with glittering eyes and shining scale, the enormous dragon of the North. An aged crone in rags, leaning on a staff, and gazing malignantly on the visitors, with bleared but fiery eyes, stood opposite the tomb of the gigantic dead. And now the fairies themselves completed the group! But all was dumb and unutterably silent,—the silence that floats over some antique city of the desert, when, for the first time for a hundred centuries, a living foot enters its desolate remains; the silence that belongs to the dust of eld,—deep, solemn, palpable, and sinking into the heart with a leaden and death-like weight. Even the English fairy spoke not; she held her breath, and gazing on the tomb, she saw, in rude vast characters,—

THE TEUTON.

"*We* are all that remain of his religion!" said the prince, as they turned from the dread temple.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FAIRY'S CAVE, AND THE FAIRY'S WISH.

It was evening; and the fairies were dancing beneath the twilight star.

"And why art thou sad, my violet?" said the prince; "for thine eyes seek the ground!"

"Now that I have found thee," answered the queen, "and now that I feel what happy love is to a fairy, I sigh over that love which I have lately witnessed among mortals, but the bud of whose happiness already conceals the worm. For well didst thou say, my prince, that we are linked with a mysterious affinity to mankind, and whatever is pure and gentle amongst them speaks at once to our sympathy, and commands our vigils."

"And most of all," said the German fairy, "are they who love under our watch; for love is the golden chain that binds all in the universe: love lights up alike the star and the glow-worm; and wherever there is love in men's lot, lies the secret affinity with men, and with things divine."

"But with the human race," said Nymphalin, "there is no love that outlasts the hour, for either death ends, or custom alters. When the blossom comes to fruit, it is plucked and seen no more; and therefore, when I behold true love sentenced to an early grave, I comfort myself that I shall not at least behold the beauty dimmed, and the softness of the heart hardened into stone. Yet, my prince, while still the pulse can beat, and the warm blood flow, in that beautiful form which I have watched over of late, let me not desert her; still let my influence keep the sky fair, and the breezes pure; still let me drive the vapour from the moon, and the clouds from the faces of the stars; still let me fill her dreams with tender and brilliant images, and glass in the mirror of sleep the

happiest visions of fairy-land; still let me pour over her eyes that magic, which suffers them to see no fault in one in whom she has garnered up her soul! And as death comes slowly on, still let me rob the spectre of its terror, and the grave of its sting; so that, all gently and unconscious to herself, life may glide into the Great Ocean where the shadows lie, and the spirit without guile may be severed from its mansion without pain!"

The wish of the fairy was fulfilled.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BANKS OF THE RHINE. — FROM THE DRACHENFELS TO BROHL. — AN INCIDENT THAT SUFFICES IN THIS TALE FOR AN EPOCH.

FROM the Drachenfels commences the true glory of the Rhine; and once more Gertrude's eyes conquered the languor that crept gradually over them as she gazed on the banks around.

Fair blew the breeze, and freshly curled the waters; and Gertrude did not feel the vulture that had fixed its talons within her breast. The Rhine widens, like a broad lake, between the Drachenfels and Unkel; villages are scattered over the extended plain on the left; on the right is the Isle of Werth and the houses of Oberwinter; the hills are covered with vines; and still Gertrude turned back with a lingering gaze to the lofty crest of the Seven Hills.

On, on — and the spires of Unkel rose above a curve in the banks, and on the opposite shore stretched those wondrous basaltic columns which extend to the middle of the river, and when the Rhine runs low, you may see them like an engulfed city beneath the waves. You then view the ruins of Okkenfels, and hear the voice of the pastoral Gasbach pouring its waters into the Rhine. From amidst the clefts of the rocks

the vine peeps luxuriantly forth, and gives a richness and colouring to what Nature, left to herself, intended for the stern.

"But turn your eye backward to the right," said Trevlyan; "those banks were formerly the special haunt of the bold robbers of the Rhine, and from amidst the entangled brakes that then covered the ragged cliffs they rushed upon their prey. In the gloomy canvas of those feudal days what vigorous and mighty images were crowded! A robber's life amidst these mountains, and beside this mountain stream, must have been the very poetry of the spot carried into action."

They rested at Brohl, a small town between two mountains. On the summit of one you see the gray remains of Rheinech. There is something weird and preternatural about the aspect of this place; its soil betrays signs that in the former ages (from which even tradition is fast fading away) some volcano here exhausted its fires. The stratum of the earth is black and pitchy, and the springs beneath it are of a dark and graveolent water. Here the stream of the Brohlbach falls into the Rhine, and in a valley rich with oak and pine, and full of caverns, which are not without their traditionary inmates, stands the castle of Schweppenbourg, which our party failed not to visit.

Gertrude felt fatigued on their return, and Trevlyan sat by her in the little inn, while Vane went forth, with the curiosity of science, to examine the strata of the soil.

They conversed in the frankness of their plighted troth upon those topics which are only for lovers: upon the bright chapter in the history of their love; their first meeting; their first impressions; the little incidents in their present journey,—incidents noticed by themselves alone; that life *within* life which two persons know together,—which one knows not without the other, which ceases to both the instant they are divided.

"I know not what the love of others may be," said Gertrude, "but ours seems different from all of which I have read. Books tell us of jealousies and misconstructions, and the necessity of an absence, the sweetness of a quarrel; but *we*,

dearest Albert, have had no experience of these passages in love. *We* have never misunderstood each other; *we* have no reconciliation to look back to. When was there ever occasion for me to ask forgiveness from you? Our love is made up only of one memory,—unceasing kindness! A harsh word, a wronging thought, never broke in upon the happiness we have felt and feel.”

“Dearest Gertrude,” said Trevlyan, “that character of our love is caught from you; you, the soft, the gentle, have been its pervading genius; and the well has been smooth and pure, for you were the spirit that lived within its depths.”

And to such talk succeeded silence still more sweet,—the silence of the hushed and overflowing heart. The last voices of the birds, the sun slowly sinking in the west, the fragrance of descending dews, filled them with that deep and mysterious sympathy which exists between Love and Nature.

It was after such a silence—a long silence, that seemed but as a moment—that Trevlyan spoke, but Gertrude answered not; and, yearning once more for her sweet voice, he turned and saw that she had fainted away.

This was the first indication of the point to which her increasing debility had arrived. Trevlyan’s heart stood still, and then beat violently; a thousand fears crept over him; he clasped her in his arms, and bore her to the open window. The setting sun fell upon her countenance, from which the play of the young heart and warm fancy had fled, and in its deep and still repose the ravages of disease were darkly visible. What were then his emotions! His heart was like stone; but he felt a rush as of a torrent to his temples: his eyes grew dizzy,—he was stunned by the greatness of his despair. For the last week he had taken hope for his companion; Gertrude had seemed so much stronger, for her happiness had given her a false support. And though there had been moments when, watching the bright hectic come and go, and her step linger, and the breath heave short, he had felt the hope suddenly cease, yet never had he known till now that fulness of anguish, that dread certainty of the worst, which the calm, fair face before him struck into his soul; and

mixed with this agony as he gazed was all the passion of the most ardent love. For there she lay in his arms, the gentle breath rising from lips where the rose yet lingered, and the long, rich hair, soft and silken as an infant's, stealing from its confinement: everything that belonged to Gertrude's beauty was so inexpressibly soft and pure and youthful! Scarcely seventeen, she seemed much younger than she was; her figure had sunken from its roundness, but still how light, how lovely were its wrecks! the neck whiter than snow, the fair small hand! Her weight was scarcely felt in the arms of her lover; and he — what a contrast! — was in all the pride and flower of glorious manhood! His was the lofty brow, the wreathing hair, the haughty eye, the elastic form; and upon this frail, perishable thing had he fixed all his heart, all the hopes of his youth, the pride of his manhood, his schemes, his energies, his ambition!

"Oh, Gertrude!" cried he, "is it — is it thus — is there indeed no hope?"

And Gertrude now slowly recovering, and opening her eyes upon Trevelyman's face, the revulsion was so great, his emotions so overpowering, that, clasping her to his bosom, as if even death should not tear her away from him, he wept over her in an agony of tears; not those tears that relieve the heart, but the fiery rain of the internal storm, a sign of the fierce tumult that shook the very core of his existence, not a relief.

Awakened to herself, Gertrude, in amazement and alarm, threw her arms around his neck, and, looking wistfully into his face, implored him to speak to her.

"Was it my illness, love?" said she; and the music of her voice only conveyed to him the thought of how soon it would be dumb to him forever. "Nay," she continued winningly, "it was but the heat of the day; I am better now, — I am well; there is no cause to be alarmed for me:" and with all the innocent fondness of extreme youth, she kissed the burning tears from his eyes.

There was a playfulness, an innocence in this poor girl, so unconscious as yet of her destiny, which rendered her fate

doubly touching, and which to the stern Trevelyman, hackneyed by the world, made her irresistible charm; and now as she put aside her hair, and looked up gratefully, yet pleadingly, into his face, he could scarce refrain from pouring out to her the confession of his anguish and despair. But the necessity of self-control, the necessity of concealing from *her* a knowledge which might only, by impressing her imagination, expedite her doom, while it would embitter to her mind the unconscious enjoyment of the hour, nerved and manned him. He checked by those violent efforts which only men can make, the evidence of his emotions; and endeavoured, by a rapid torrent of words, to divert her attention from a weakness, the causes of which he could not explain. Fortunately Vane soon returned, and Trevelyman, consigning Gertrude to his care, hastily left the room.

Gertrude sank into a revery.

"Ah, dear father!" said she, suddenly, and after a pause, "if I indeed were worse than I have thought myself of late, if I were to die now, what would Trevelyman feel? Pray God I may live for his sake!"

"My child, do not talk thus; you are better, much better than you were. Ere the autumn ends, Trevelyman's happiness will be your lawful care. Do not think so despondently of yourself."

"I thought not of myself," sighed Gertrude, "but of *him!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

GERTRUDE. — THE EXCURSION TO HAMMERSTEIN. — THOUGHTS.

THE next day they visited the environs of Brohl. Gertrude was unusually silent; for her temper, naturally sunny and enthusiastic, was accustomed to light up everything she saw. Ah, once how bounding was that step! how undulating

mixed with this agony as he gazed was all the passion of the most ardent love. For there she lay in his arms, the gentle breath rising from lips where the rose yet lingered, and the long, rich hair, soft and silken as an infant's, stealing from its confinement: everything that belonged to Gertrude's beauty was so inexpressibly soft and pure and youthful! Scarcely seventeen, she seemed much younger than she was; her figure had sunken from its roundness, but still how light, how lovely were its wrecks! the neck whiter than snow, the fair small hand! Her weight was scarcely felt in the arms of her lover; and he — what a contrast! — was in all the pride and flower of glorious manhood! His was the lofty brow, the wreathing hair, the haughty eye, the elastic form; and upon this frail, perishable thing had he fixed all his heart, all the hopes of his youth, the pride of his manhood, his schemes, his energies, his ambition!

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"I thought not of myself," sighed Gertrude, "but of *him!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

GERTRUDE. — THE EXCURSION TO HAMMERSTEIN. — THOUGHTS.

THE next day they visited the environs of Brohl. Gertrude was unusually silent; for her temper, naturally sunny and enthusiastic, was accustomed to light up everything she saw. Ah, once how bounding was that step! how undulating

the young graces of that form! how playfully once danced the ringlets on that laughing cheek! But she clung to Trevlyan's proud form with a yet more endearing tenderness than was her wont, and hung yet more eagerly on his words; her hand sought his, and she often pressed it to her lips, and sighed as she did so. Something that she would not tell seemed passing within her, and sobered her playful mood. But there was this noticeable in Gertrude: whatever took away from her gayety increased her tenderness. The infirmities of her frame never touched her temper. She was kind, gentle, loving to the last.

They had crossed to the opposite banks, to visit the Castle of Hammerstein. The evening was transparently serene and clear; and the warmth of the sun yet lingered upon the air, even though the twilight had passed and the moon risen, as their boat returned by a lengthened passage to the village. Broad and straight flows the Rhine in this part of its career. On one side lay the wooded village of Namedy, the hamlet of Fornech, backed by the blue rock of Kruezbörner Ley, the mountains that shield the mysterious Brohl; and on the opposite shore they saw the mighty rock of Hammerstein, with the green and livid ruins sleeping in the melancholy moonlight. Two towers rose haughtily above the more dismantled wrecks. How changed since the alternate banners of the Spaniard and the Swede waved from their ramparts, in that great war in which the gorgeous Wallenstein won his laurels! And in its mighty calm flowed on the ancestral Rhine, the vessel reflected on its smooth expanse; and above, girded by thin and shadowy clouds, the moon cast her shadows upon rocks covered with verdure, and brought into a dim light the twin spires of Andernach, tranquil in the distance.

"How beautiful is this hour!" said Gertrude, with a low voice, "surely we do not live enough in the night; one half the beauty of the world is slept away. What in the day can equal the holy calm, the loveliness, and the stillness which the moon now casts over the earth? These," she continued, pressing Trevlyan's hand, "are hours to remember; and *you* — will you ever forget them?"

Something there is in recollections of such times and scenes that seem not to belong to real life, but are rather an episode in its history; they are like some wandering into a more ideal world; they refuse to blend with our ruder associations; they live in us, apart and alone, to be treasured ever, but not lightly to be recalled. There are none living to whom we can confide them,—who can sympathize with what then we felt? It is this that makes poetry, and that page which we create as a confidant to ourselves, necessary to the thoughts that weigh upon the breast. We write, for our writing is our friend, the inanimate paper is our confessional; we pour forth on it the thoughts that we could tell to no private ear, and are relieved, are consoled. And if genius has one prerogative dearer than the rest, it is that which enables it to do honour to the dead,—to revive the beauty, the virtue that are no more; to wreath chaplets that outlive the day around the urn which were else forgotten by the world!

When the poet mourns, in his immortal verse, for the dead, tell me not that fame is in his mind! It is filled by thoughts, by emotions that shut out the living. He is breathing to his genius—to that sole and constant friend which has grown up with him from his cradle—the sorrows too delicate for human sympathy! and when afterwards he consigns the confession to the crowd, it is indeed from the hope of honour,—honour not for himself, but for the being that is no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTER FROM TREVYLYAN TO —.

COBLENTZ.

I AM obliged to you, my dear friend, for your letter; which, indeed, I have not, in the course of our rapid journey, had the leisure, perhaps the heart, to answer before. But we are staying in this town for some days, and I write now in the

early morning, ere any one else in our hotel is awake. Do not tell me of adventure, of politics, of intrigues; my nature is altered. I threw down your letter, animated and brilliant as it was, with a sick and revolted heart. But I am now in somewhat less dejected spirits. Gertrude is better,—yes, really better; there is a physician here who gives me hope; my care is perpetually to amuse, and never to fatigue her,—never to permit her thoughts to rest upon herself. For I have imagined that illness cannot, at least in the unexhausted vigour of our years, fasten upon us irremediably unless we feed it with our own belief in its existence. You see men of the most delicate frames engaged in active and professional pursuits, who literally have no time for illness. Let them become idle, let them take care of themselves, let them think of their health—and they die! The rust rots the steel which use preserves; and, thank Heaven, although Gertrude, once during our voyage, seemed roused, by an inexcusable imprudence of emotion on my part, into some suspicion of her state, yet it passed away; for she thinks rarely of herself,—I am ever in her thoughts and seldom from her side, and you know, too, the sanguine and credulous nature of her disease. But, indeed, I now hope more than I have done since I knew her.

When, after an excited and adventurous life which had comprised so many changes in so few years, I found myself at rest in the bosom of a retired and remote part of the country, and Gertrude and her father were my only neighbours, I was in that state of mind in which the passions, recruited by solitude, are accessible to the purer and more divine emotions. I was struck by Gertrude's beauty, I was charmed by her simplicity. Worn in the usages and fashions of the world, the inexperience, the trustfulness, the exceeding youth of her mind, charmed and touched me; but when I saw the stamp of our national disease in her bright eye and transparent cheek, I felt my love chilled while my interest was increased. I fancied myself safe, and I went daily into the danger; I imagined so pure a light could not burn, and I was consumed. Not till my anxiety grew into pain, my interest into terror, did I know the secret of my own heart; and at the moment

that I discovered this secret, I discovered also that Gertrude loved me! What a destiny was mine! what happiness, yet what misery! Gertrude was my own — but for what period? I might touch that soft hand, I might listen to the tenderest confession from that silver voice; but all the while my heart spoke of passion, my reason whispered of death. You know that I am considered of a cold and almost callous nature; that I am not easily moved into affection; but my very pride bowed me here into weakness. There was so soft a demand upon my protection, so constant an appeal to my anxiety. You know that my father's quick temper burns within me, that I am hot, and stern, and exacting; but one hasty word, one thought of myself, here were inexcusable. So brief a time might be left for her earthly happiness, — could I embitter one moment? All that feeling of uncertainty which should in prudence have prevented my love, increased it almost to a preternatural excess. That which it is said mothers feel for an only child in sickness, I feel for Gertrude. *My* existence is not! — I exist in her!

Her illness increased upon her at home; they have recommended travel. She chose the course we were to pursue, and, fortunately, it was so familiar to me, that I have been enabled to brighten the way. I am ever on the watch that she shall not know a weary hour; you would almost smile to see how I have roused myself from my habitual silence, and to find me — me, the scheming and worldly actor of real life — plunged back into the early romance of my boyhood, and charming the childish delight of Gertrude with the invention of fables and the traditions of the Rhine.

But I believe that I have succeeded in my object; if not, what is left to me? *Gertrude is better!* — In that sentence what visions of hope dawn upon me! I wish you could have seen Gertrude before we left England; you might then have understood my love for her. Not that we have not, in the gay capitals of Europe, paid our brief vows to forms more richly beautiful; not that we have not been charmed by a more brilliant genius, by a more tutored grace. But there is that in Gertrude which I never saw before, — the union of the

childish and the intellectual, an ethereal simplicity, a temper that is never dimmed, a tenderness — O God! let me not speak of her virtues, for they only tell me how little she is suited to the earth.

You will direct to me at Mayence, whither our course now leads us, and your friendship will find indulgence for a letter that is so little a reply to yours.

Your sincere friend,

A. G. TREVILYAN.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COBLENTZ. — EXCURSION TO THE MOUNTAINS OF TAUNUS;
ROMAN TOWER IN THE VALLEY OF EHRENBREITSTEIN. —
TRAVEL, ITS PLEASURES ESTIMATED DIFFERENTLY BY THE
YOUNG AND THE OLD. — THE STUDENT OF HEIDELBERG;
HIS CRITICISMS ON GERMAN LITERATURE.

GERTRUDE had, indeed, apparently rallied during their stay at Coblenz; and a French physician established in the town (who adopted a peculiar treatment for consumption, which had been attended with no ordinary success) gave her father and Trevilyan a sanguine assurance of her ultimate recovery. The time they passed within the white walls of Coblenz was, therefore, the happiest and most cheerful part of their pilgrimage. They visited the various places in its vicinity; but the excursion which most delighted Gertrude was one to the mountains of Taunus.

They took advantage of a beautiful September day; and, crossing the river, commenced their tour from the Thal, or valley of Ehrenbreitstein. They stopped on their way to view the remains of a Roman tower in the valley; for the whole of that district bears frequent witness of the ancient conquerors of the world. The mountains of Taunus are still intersected with the roads which the Romans cut to the mines

that supplied them with silver. Roman urns and inscribed stones are often found in these ancient places. The stones, inscribed with names utterly unknown,—a type of the uncertainty of fame! the urns, from which the dust is gone, a very satire upon life!

Lone, gray, and mouldering, this tower stands aloft in the valley; and the quiet Vane smiled to see the uniform of a modern Prussian, with his white belt and lifted bayonet, by the spot which had once echoed to the clang of the Roman arms. The soldier was paying a momentary court to a country damsel, whose straw hat and rustic dress did not stifle the vanity of the sex; and this rude and humble gallantry, in that spot, was another moral in the history of human passions. Above, the ramparts of a modern rule frowned down upon the solitary tower, as if in the vain insolence with which present power looks upon past decay,—the living race upon ancestral greatness. And indeed, in this respect, rightly! for modern times have no parallel to that degradation of human dignity stamped upon the ancient world by the long sway of the Imperial Harlot, all slavery herself, yet all tyranny to earth;—and, like her own Messalina, at once a prostitute and an empress!

They continued their course by the ancient baths of Ems, and keeping by the banks of the romantic Lahn, arrived at Holzapfel.

"Ah," said Gertrude, one day, as they proceeded to the springs of the Carlovingian Wiesbaden, "surely perpetual travel with those we love must be the happiest state of existence! If home has its comforts, it also has its cares; but here we are at home with Nature, and the minor evils vanish almost before they are felt."

"True," said Trevlyan, "we escape from 'THE LITTLE,' which is the curse of life; the small cares that devour us up, the grievances of the day. We are feeding the divinest part of our nature,—the appetite to admire."

"But of all things wearisome," said Vane, "a succession of changes is the most. There can be a monotony in variety itself. As the eye aches in gazing long at the new shapes of

the kaleidoscope, the mind aches at the fatigue of a constant alternation of objects; and we delightedly return to 'REST,' which is to life what green is to the earth."

In the course of their sojourn among the various baths of Taunus, they fell in, by accident, with a German student of Heidelberg, who was pursuing the pedestrian excursions so peculiarly favoured by his tribe. He was tamer and gentler than the general herd of those young wanderers, and our party were much pleased with his enthusiasm, because it was unaffected. He had been in England, and spoke its language almost as a native.

"Our literature," said he, one day, conversing with Vane, "has two faults,—we are too subtle and too homely. We do not speak enough to the broad comprehension of mankind; we are forever making abstract qualities of flesh and blood. Our critics have turned your 'Hamlet' into an allegory; they will not even allow Shakspeare to paint mankind, but insist on his embodying qualities. They turn poetry into metaphysics, and truth seems to them shallow, unless an allegory, which is false, can be seen at the bottom. Again, too, with our most imaginative works we mix a homeliness that we fancy touching, but which in reality is ludicrous. We eternally step from the sublime to the ridiculous; we want taste."

"But not, I hope, French taste. Do not govern a Goethe, or even a Richter, by a Boileau!" said Trevlyan.

"No; but Boileau's taste was false. Men who have the reputation for good taste often acquire it solely because of the want of genius. By taste I mean a quick tact into the harmony of composition, the art of making the whole consistent with its parts, the *concinnitas*. Schiller alone of our authors has it. But we are fast mending; and by following shadows so long we have been led at last to the substance. Our past literature is to us what astrology was to science,—false but ennobling, and conducting us to the true language of the intellectual heaven."

Another time the scenes they passed, interspersed with the ruins of frequent monasteries, leading them to converse on

the monastic life, and the various additions time makes to religion, the German said: "Perhaps one of the works most wanted in the world is the history of Religion. We have several books, it is true, on the subject, but none that supply the want I allude to. A German ought to write it; for it is, probably, only a German that would have the requisite learning. A German only, too, is likely to treat the mighty subject with boldness, and yet with veneration; without the shallow flippancy of the Frenchman, without the timid sectarianism of the English. It would be a noble task, to trace the winding mazes of antique falsehood; to clear up the first glimmerings of divine truth; to separate Jehovah's word from man's invention; to vindicate the All-merciful from the dread creeds of bloodshed and of fear: and, watching in the great Heaven of Truth the dawning of the True Star, follow it — like the Magi of the East — till it rested above the real God. Not indeed presuming to such a task," continued the German, with a slight blush, "I have about me a humble essay, which treats only of one part of that august subject; which, leaving to a loftier genius the history of the true religion, may be considered as the history of a false one,— of such a creed as Christianity supplanted in the North; or such as may perhaps be found among the fiercest of the savage tribes. It is a fiction — as you may conceive; but yet, by a constant reference to the early records of human learning, I have studied to weave it up from truths. If you would like to hear it,— it is very short —"

"Above all things," said Vane; and the German drew a manuscript neatly bound from his pocket.

"After having myself criticised so insolently the faults of our national literature," said he, smiling, "you will have a right to criticise the faults that belong to so humble a disciple of it; but you will see that, though I have commenced with the allegorical or the supernatural, I have endeavoured to avoid the subtlety of conceit, and the obscurity of design, which I blame in the wilder of our authors. As to the style, I wished to suit it to the subject; it ought to be, unless I err, rugged and massive,— hewn, as it were, out of the rock of

primeval language. But you, madam — doubtless you do not understand German?"

"Her mother was an Austrian," said Vane; "and she knows at least enough of the tongue to understand you; so pray begin."

Without further preface, the German then commenced the story, which the reader will find translated¹ in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FALLEN STAR; OR THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

AND the STARS sat, each on his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. It was the night ushering in the new year, a night on which every star receives from the archangel that then visits the universal galaxy its peculiar charge. The destinies of men and empires are then portioned forth for the coming year, and, unconsciously to ourselves, our fates become minioned to the stars. A hushed and solemn night is that in which the dark gates of time open to receive the ghost of the Dead Year, and the young and radiant Stranger rushes forth from the clouded chasms of Eternity. On that night, it is said that there are given to the spirits that we see not a privilege and a power; the dead are troubled in their forgotten graves, and men feast and laugh, while demon and angel are contending for their doom.

It was night in heaven; all was unutterably silent; the music of the spheres had paused, and not a sound came from the angels of the stars; and they who sat upon those shining thrones were three thousand and ten, each resembling each. Eternal youth clothed their radiant limbs with celestial beauty, and on their faces was written the dread of calm,— that fear-

¹ Nevertheless I beg to state seriously, that the German student is an impostor; and that he has no right to wrest the parentage of the fiction from the true author.

ful stillness which feels not, sympathizes not with the doom over which it broods. War, tempest, pestilence, the rise of empires and their fall, they ordain, they compass, unexultant and uncompassionate. The fell and thrilling crimes that stalk abroad when the world sleeps,—the parricide with his stealthy step and horrent brow and lifted knife; the unwifed mother that glides out and looks behind, and behind, and shudders, and casts her babe upon the river, and hears the wail, and pities not—the splash, and does not tremble,—these the starred kings behold, to these they lead the unconscious step; but the guilt blanches not their lustre, neither doth remorse wither their unwrinkled youth. Each star wore a kingly diadem; round the loins of each was a graven belt, graven with many and mighty signs; and the foot of each was on a burning ball, and the right arm drooped over the knee as they bent down from their thrones. They moved not a limb or feature, save the finger of the right hand, which ever and anon moved slowly pointing, and regulated the fates of men as the hand of the dial speaks the career of time.

One only of the three thousand and ten wore not the same aspect as his crowned brethren,—a star smaller than the rest, and less luminous; the countenance of this star was not impressed with the awful calmness of the others, but there were sullenness and discontent upon his mighty brow.

And this star said to himself, "Behold! I am created less glorious than my fellows, and the archangel apportioned not to me the same lordly destinies. Not for me are the dooms of kings and bards, the rulers of empires, or, yet nobler, the swayers and harmonists of souls. Sluggish are the spirits and base the lot of the men I am ordained to lead through a dull life to a fameless grave. And wherefore? Is it mine own fault, or is it the fault which is not mine, that I was woven of beams less glorious than my brethren? Lo! when the archangel comes, I will bow not my crowned head to his decrees. I will speak, as the ancestral Lucifer before me: *he* rebelled because of his glory, *I* because of my obscurity; *he* from the ambition of pride, and *I* from its discontent."

And while the star was thus communing with himself, the

upward heavens were parted as by a long river of light, and adown that stream swiftly, and without sound, sped the archangel visitor of the stars. His vast limbs floated in the liquid lustre, and his outspread wings, each plume the glory of a sun, bore him noiselessly along; but thick clouds veiled his lustre from the eyes of mortals, and while above all was bathed in the serenity of his splendour, tempest and storm broke below over the children of the earth: "He bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet."

And the stillness on the faces of the stars became yet more still, and the awfulness was humbled into awe. Right above their thrones paused the course of the archangel; and his wings stretched from east to west, overshadowing with the shadow of light the immensity of space. Then forth, in the shining stillness, rolled the dread music of his voice: and, fulfilling the heraldry of God, to each star he appointed the duty and the charge; and each star bowed his head yet lower as he heard the fiat, while his throne rocked and trembled at the Majesty of the Word. But at last, when each of the brighter stars had, in succession, received the mandate, and the viceroyalty over the nations of the earth, the purple and diadems of kings, the archangel addressed the lesser star as he sat apart from his fellows.

"Behold," said the archangel, "the rude tribes of the North, the fishermen of the river that flows beneath, and the hunters of the forests that darken the mountain tops with verdure! these be thy charge, and their destinies thy care. Nor deem thou, O Star of the sullen beams, that thy duties are less glorious than the duties of thy brethren; for the peasant is not less to thy master and mine than the monarch; nor doth the doom of empires rest more upon the sovereign than on the herd. The passions and the heart are the dominion of the stars,—a mighty realm; nor less mighty beneath the hide that garbs the shepherd than under the jewelled robes of the eastern kings."

Then the star lifted his pale front from his breast, and answered the archangel.

"Lo!" he said, "ages have passed, and each year thou hast

appointed me to the same ignoble charge. Release me, I pray thee, from the duties that I scorn; or, if thou wilt that the lowlier race of men be my charge, give unto me the charge not of many, but of one, and suffer me to breathe into him the desire that spurns the valleys of life, and ascends its steep. If the humble are given to me, let there be amongst them one whom I may lead on the mission that shall abase the proud; for, behold, O Appointer of the Stars, as I have sat for uncounted years upon my solitary throne, brooding over the things beneath, my spirit hath gathered wisdom from the changes that shift below. Looking upon the tribes of earth, I have seen how the multitude are swayed, and tracked the steps that lead weakness into power; and fain would I be the ruler of one who, if abased, shall aspire to rule."

As a sudden cloud over the face of noon was the change on the brow of the archangel.

"Proud and melancholy star," said the herald, "thy wish would war with the courses of the invisible DESTINY, that, throned far above, sways and harmonizes all,—the source from which the lesser rivers of fate are eternally gushing through the heart of the universe of things. Thinkest thou that thy wisdom, of itself, can lead the peasant to become a king?"

And the crowned star gazed undauntedly on the face of the archangel, and answered,—

"Yea! Grant me but one trial!"

Ere the archangel could reply, the farthest centre of the Heaven was rent as by a thunderbolt; and the divine herald covered his face with his hands, and a voice low and sweet and mild, with the consciousness of unquestionable power, spoke forth to the repining star.

"The time has arrived when thou mayest have thy wish. Below thee, upon yon solitary plain, sits a mortal, gloomy as thyself, who, born under thy influence, may be moulded to thy will."

The voice ceased as the voice of a dream. Silence was over the seas of space, and the archangel, once more borne aloft, slowly soared away into the farther heaven, to promulgate the

divine bidding to the stars of far-distant worlds. But the soul of the discontented star exulted within itself; and it said, "I will call forth a king from the valley of the herdsman that shall trample on the kings subject to my fellows, and render the charge of the contemned star more glorious than the minions of its favoured brethren; thus shall I revenge neglect! thus shall I prove my claim hereafter to the heritage of the great of earth!"

At that time, though the world had rolled on for ages, and the pilgrimage of man had passed through various states of existence, which our dim traditionary knowledge has not preserved, yet the condition of our race in the northern hemisphere was then what *we*, in our imperfect lore, have conceived to be among the earliest.

By a rude and vast pile of stones, the masonry of arts forgotten, a lonely man sat at midnight, gazing upon the heavens. A storm had just passed from the earth; the clouds had rolled away, and the high stars looked down upon the rapid waters of the Rhine; and no sound save the roar of the waves, and the dripping of the rain from the mighty trees, was heard around the ruined pile. The white sheep lay scattered on the plain, and slumber with them. He sat watching over the herd, lest the foes of a neighbouring tribe seized them unawares, and thus he communed with himself: "The king sits upon his throne, and is honoured by a warrior race, and the warrior exults in the trophies he has won; the step of the huntsman is bold upon the mountain-top, and his name is sung at night round the pine-fires by the lips of the bard; and the bard himself hath honour in the hall. But I, who belong not to the race of kings, and whose limbs can bound not to the rapture of war, nor scale the eyries of the eagle and the haunts of the swift stag; whose hand cannot string the harp, and whose voice is harsh in the song,—I have neither honour nor command, and men bow not the head as I pass along; yet do I feel within me the consciousness of a great power that should rule my species — not obey. My eye pierces the secret

hearts of men. I see their thoughts ere their lips proclaim them; and I scorn, while I see, the weakness and the vices which I never shared. I laugh at the madness of the warrior; I mock within my soul at the tyranny of kings. Surely there is something in man's nature more fitted to command, more worthy of renown, than the sinews of the arm, or the swiftness of the feet, or the accident of birth!"

As Morven, the son of Osslah, thus mused within himself, still looking at the heavens, the solitary man beheld a star suddenly shooting from its place, and speeding through the silent air, till it suddenly paused right over the midnight river, and facing the inmate of the pile of stones.

As he gazed upon the star, strange thoughts grew slowly over him. He drank, as it were, from its solemn aspect the spirit of a great design. A dark cloud rapidly passing over the earth snatched the star from his sight, but left to his awakened mind the thoughts and the dim scheme that had come to him as he gazed.

When the sun arose, one of his brethren relieved him of his charge over the herd, and he went away, but not to his father's home. Musingly he plunged into the dark and leafless recesses of the winter forest; and shaped out of his wild thoughts, more palpably and clearly, the outline of his daring hope. While thus absorbed he heard a great noise in the forest, and, fearful lest the hostile tribe of the Alrich might pierce that way, he ascended one of the loftiest pine-trees, to whose perpetual verdure the winter had not denied the shelter he sought; and, concealed by its branches, he looked anxiously forth in the direction whence the noise had proceeded. And it came,—it came with a tramp and a crash, and a crushing tread upon the crunched boughs and matted leaves that strewed the soil; it came, it came,—the monster that the world now holds no more,—the mighty Mammoth of the North! Slowly it moved its huge strength along, and its burning eyes glittered through the gloomy shade; its jaws, falling apart, showed the grinders with which it snapped asunder the young oaks of the forest; and the vast tusks, which, curved downward to the midst of its massive limbs,

glistened white and ghastly, curdling the blood of one destined hereafter to be the dreadest ruler of the men of that distant age.

The livid eyes of the monster fastened on the form of the herdsman, even amidst the thick darkness of the pine. It paused, it glared upon him; its jaws opened, and a low deep sound, as of gathering thunder, seemed to the son of Osslah as the knell of a dreadful grave. But after glaring on him for some moments, it again, and calmly, pursued its terrible way, crashing the boughs as it marched along, till the last sound of its heavy tread died away upon his ear.¹

Ere yet, however, Morven summoned the courage to descend the tree, he saw the shining of arms through the bare branches of the wood, and presently a small band of the hostile Alrich came into sight. He was perfectly hidden from them; and, listening as they passed him, he heard one say to another,—

"The night covers all things; why attack them by day?"

And he who seemed the chief of the band, answered,—

"Right. To-night, when they sleep in their city, we will upon them. Lo! they will be drenched in wine, and fall like sheep into our hands."

"But where, O chief," said a third of the band, "shall our men hide during the day? for there are many hunters among the youth of the Oestrich tribe, and they might see us in the forest unawares, and arm their race against our coming."

"I have prepared for that," answered the chief. "Is not the dark cavern of Oderlin at hand? Will it not shelter us from the eyes of the victims?"

Then the men laughed, and, shouting, they went their way adown the forest.

When they were gone, Morven cautiously descended, and, striking into a broad path, hastened to a vale that lay between the forest and the river in which was the city where the chief of his country dwelt. As he passed by the warlike

¹ *The Critic* will perceive that this sketch of the beast, whose race has perished, is mainly intended to designate the remote period of the world in which the tale is cast.

men, giants in that day, who thronged the streets (if streets they might be called), their half garments parting from their huge limbs, the quiver at their backs, and the hunting spear in their hand, they laughed and shouted out, and, pointing to him, cried, "Morven the woman! Morven the cripple! what dost thou among men?"

For the son of Osslah was small in stature and of slender strength, and his step had halted from his birth; but he passed through the warriors unheedingly. At the outskirts of the city he came upon a tall pile in which some old men dwelt by themselves, and counselled the king when times of danger, or when the failure of the season, the famine or the drought, perplexed the ruler, and clouded the savage fronts of his warrior tribe.

They gave the counsels of experience, and when experience failed, they drew, in their believing ignorance, assurances and omens from the winds of heaven, the changes of the moon, and the flights of the wandering birds. Filled — by the voices of the elements, and the variety of mysteries, which ever shift along the face of things, unsolved by the wonder which pauses not, the fear which believes, and that eternal reasoning of all experience, which assigns causes to effect — with the notion of superior powers, they assisted their ignorance by the conjectures of their superstition. But as yet they knew no craft and practised no *voluntary* delusion; they trembled too much at the mysteries which had created their faith to seek to belie them. They counselled as they believed, and the bold dream of governing their warriors and their kings by the wisdom of deceit had never dared to cross men thus worn and gray with age.

The son of Osslah entered the vast pile with a fearless step, and approached the place at the upper end of the hall where the old men sat in conclave.

"How, base-born and craven-limbed!" cried the eldest, who had been a noted warrior in his day, "darest thou enter unsummoned amidst the secret councils of the wise men? Knowest thou not, scatterling! that the penalty is death?"

"Slay me, if thou wilt," answered Morven, "but hear! As

I sat last night in the ruined palace of our ancient kings, tending, as my father bade me, the sheep that grazed around, lest the fierce tribe of Alrich should descend unseen from the mountains upon the herd, a storm came darkly on; and when the storm had ceased, and I looked above on the sky, I saw a star descend from its height towards me, and a voice from the star said: 'Son of Osslah, leave thy herd and seek the council of the wise men and say unto them, that they take thee as one of their number, or that sudden will be the destruction of them and theirs.' But I had courage to answer the voice, and I said, 'Mock not the poor son of the herdsman. Behold, they will kill me if I utter so rash a word, for I am poor and valueless in the eyes of the tribe of Oestrich, and the great in deeds and the gray of hair alone sit in the council of the wise men.'

"Then the voice said: 'Do my bidding, and I will give thee a token that thou comest from the Powers that sway the seasons and sail upon the eagles of the winds. Say unto the wise men this very night if they refuse to receive thee of their band, evil shall fall upon them, and the morrow shall dawn in blood.'

"Then the voice ceased, and the cloud passed over the star; and I communed with myself, and came, O dread father, mournfully unto you; for I feared that ye would smite me because of my bold tongue, and that ye would sentence me to the death, in that I asked what may scarce be given even to the sons of kings."

Then the grim elders looked one at the other, and marvelled much, nor knew they what answer they should make to the herdsman's son.

At length one of the wise men said, "Surely there must be truth in the son of Osslah, for he would not dare to falsify the great lights of Heaven. If he had given unto men the words of the star, verily we might doubt the truth. But who would brave the vengeance of the gods of night?"

Then the elders shook their heads approvingly; but one answered and said,—

"Shall we take the herdsman's son as our equal? No!"

The name of the man who thus answered was Darvan, and his words were pleasing to the elders.

But Morven spoke out: "Of a truth, O councillors of kings, I look not to be an equal with yourselves. Enough if I tend the gates of your palace, and serve you as the son of Osslah may serve;" and he bowed his head humbly as he spoke.

Then said the chief of the elders, for he was wiser than the others, "But how wilt thou deliver us from the evil that is to come? Doubtless the star has informed thee of the service thou canst render to us if we take thee into our palace, as well as the ill that will fall on us if we refuse."

Morven answered meekly, "Surely, if thou acceptest thy servant, the star will teach him that which may requite thee; but as yet he knows only what he has uttered."

Then the sages bade him withdraw, and they communed with themselves, and they differed much; but though fierce men, and bold at the war-cry of a human foe, they shuddered at the prophecy of a star. So they resolved to take the son of Osslah, and suffer him to keep the gate of the council-hall.

He heard their decree and bowed his head, and went to the gate, and sat down by it in silence.

And the sun went down in the west, and the first stars of the twilight began to glimmer, when Morven started from his seat, and a trembling appeared to seize his limbs. His lips foamed; an agony and a fear possessed him; he writhed as a man whom the spear of a foeman has pierced with a mortal wound, and suddenly fell upon his face on the stony earth.

The elders approached him; wondering, they lifted him up. He slowly recovered as from a swoon; his eyes rolled wildly.

"Heard ye not the voice of the star?" he said.

And the chief of the elders answered, "Nay, we heard no sound."

Then Morven sighed heavily.

"To me only the word was given. Summon instantly, O councillors of the king, summon the armed men, and all the youth of the tribe, and let them take the sword and the spear, and follow thy servant! For lo! the star hath announced to

him that the foe shall fall into our hands as the wild beasts of the forests."

The son of Osslah spoke with the voice of command, and the elders were amazed. "Why pause ye?" he cried. "Do the gods of the night lie? On my head rest the peril if I deceive ye."

Then the elders communed together; and they went forth and summoned the men of arms, and all the young of the tribe; and each man took the sword and the spear, and Morven also. And the son of Osslah walked first, still looking up at the star, and he motioned them to be silent, and moved with a stealthy step.

So they went through the thickest of the forest, till they came to the mouth of a great cave, overgrown with aged and matted trees, and it was called the Cave of Oberlin; and he bade the leaders place the armed men on either side the cave, to the right and to the left, among the bushes.

So they watched silently till the night deepened, when they heard a noise in the cave and the sound of feet, and forth came an armed man; and the spear of Morven pierced him, and he fell dead at the mouth of the cave. Another and another, and both fell! Then loud and long was heard the war-cry of Alrich, and forth poured, as a stream over a narrow bed, the river of armed men. And the sons of Oestrich fell upon them, and the foe were sorely perplexed and terrified by the suddenness of the battle and the darkness of the night; and there was a great slaughter.

And when the morning came, the children of Oestrich counted the slain, and found the leader of Alrich and the chief men of the tribe amongst them; and great was the joy thereof. So they went back in triumph to the city, and they carried the brave son of Osslah on their shoulders, and shouted forth, "Glory to the servant of the star."

And Morven dwelt in the council of the wise men.

Now the king of the tribe had one daughter, and she was stately amongst the women of the tribe, and fair to look upon. And Morven gazed upon her with the eyes of love, but he did not dare to speak.

Now the son of Osslah laughed secretly at the foolishness of men; he loved them not, for they had mocked him; he honoured them not, for he had blinded the wisest of their leaders. He shunned their feasts and merriment, and lived apart and solitary. The austerity of his life increased the mysterious homage which his commune with the stars had won him, and the boldest of the warriors bowed his head to the favourite of the gods.

One day he was wandering by the side of the river, and he saw a large bird of prey rise from the waters, and give chase to a hawk that had not yet gained the full strength of its wings. From his youth the solitary Morven had loved to watch, in the great forests and by the banks of the mighty stream, the habits of the things which nature has submitted to man; and looking now on the birds, he said to himself, "Thus is it ever; by cunning or by strength each thing wishes to master its kind." While thus moralizing, the larger bird had stricken down the hawk, and it fell terrified and panting at his feet. Morven took the hawk in his hands, and the vulture shrieked above him, wheeling nearer and nearer to its protected prey; but Morven scared away the vulture, and placing the hawk in his bosom he carried it home, and tended it carefully, and fed it from his hand until it had regained its strength; and the hawk knew him, and followed him as a dog. And Morven said, smiling to himself, "Behold, the credulous fools around me put faith in the flight and motion of birds. I will teach this poor hawk to minister to my ends." So he tamed the bird, and tutored it according to its nature; but he concealed it carefully from others, and cherished it in secret.

The king of the country was old, and like to die, and the eyes of the tribe were turned to his two sons, nor knew they which was the worthier to reign. And Morven, passing through the forest one evening, saw the younger of the two, who was a great hunter, sitting mournfully under an oak, and looking with musing eyes upon the ground.

"Wherefore musest thou, O swift-footed Siror?" said the son of Osslah; "and wherefore art thou sad?"

"Thou canst not assist me," answered the prince, sternly; "take thy way."

"Nay," answered Morven, "thou knowest not what thou sayest; am I not the favourite of the stars?"

"Away, I am no graybeard whom the approach of death makes doting: talk not to me of the stars; I know only the things that my eye sees and my ear drinks in."

"Hush," said Morven, solemnly, and covering his face; "hush! lest the heavens avenge thy rashness. But, behold, the stars have given unto me to pierce the secret hearts of others; and I can tell thee the thoughts of thine."

"Speak out, base-born!"

"Thou art the younger of two, and thy name is less known in war than the name of thy brother: yet wouldst thou desire to be set over his head, and to sit on the high seat of thy father?"

The young man turned pale. "Thou hast truth in thy lips," said he, with a faltering voice.

"Not from me, but from the stars, descends the truth."

"Can the stars grant my wish?"

"They can: let us meet to-morrow." Thus saying, Morven passed into the forest.

The next day, at noon, they met again.

"I have consulted the gods of night, and they have given me the power that I prayed for, but on one condition."

"Name it."

"That thou sacrifice thy sister on their altars; thou must build up a heap of stones, and take thy sister into the wood, and lay her on the pile, and plunge thy sword into her heart; so only shalt thou reign."

The prince shuddered, and started to his feet, and shook his spear at the pale front of Morven.

"Tremble," said the son of Osslah, with a loud voice. "Hark to the gods who threaten thee with death, that thou hast dared to lift thine arm against their servant!"

As he spoke, the thunder rolled above; for one of the frequent storms of the early summer was about to break. The spear dropped from the prince's hand; he sat down, and cast his eyes on the ground.

"Wilt thou do the bidding of the stars, and reign?" said Morven.

"I will!" cried Siror, with a desperate voice.

"This evening, then, when the sun sets, thou wilt lead her hither, alone; I may not attend thee. Now, let us pile the stones."

Silently the huntsman bent his vast strength to the fragments of rock that Mervon pointed to him, and they built the altar, and went their way.

And beautiful is the dying of the great sun, when the last song of the birds fades into the lap of silence; when the islands of the cloud are bathed in light, and the first star springs up over the grave of day!

"Whither ledest thou my steps, my brother?" said Orna; "and why doth thy lip quiver; and why dost thou turn away thy face?"

"Is not the forest beautiful; does it not tempt us forth, my sister?"

"And wherefore are those heaps of stone piled together?"

"Let others answer; I piled them not."

"Thou tremblest, brother: we will return."

"Not so; by these stones is a bird that my shaft pierced to-day,—a bird of beautiful plumage that I slew for thee."

"We are by the pile; where hast thou laid the bird?"

"Here!" cried Siror; and he seized the maiden in his arms, and, casting her on the rude altar, he drew forth his sword to smite her to the heart.

Right over the stones rose a giant oak, the growth of immemorial ages; and from the oak, or from the heavens, broke forth a loud and solemn voice, "Strike not, son of kings! the stars forbear their own: the maiden thou shalt not slay; yet shalt thou reign over the race of Oestrich; and thou shalt give Orna as a bride to the favourite of the stars. Arise, and go thy way!"

The voice ceased: the terror of Orna had overpowered for a time the springs of life; and Siror bore her home through the wood in his strong arms.

"Alas!" said Morven, when, at the next day, he again met

the aspiring prince; "alas! the stars have ordained me a lot which my heart desires not: for I, lonely of life, and crippled of shape, am insensible to the fires of love; and ever, as thou and thy tribe know, I have shunned the eyes of women, for the maidens laughed at my halting step and my sullen features; and so in my youth I learned betimes to banish all thoughts of love. But since they told me (as they declared to *thee*), that only through that marriage, thou, O beloved prince! canst obtain thy father's plumed crown, I yield me to their will."

"But," said the prince, "not until I am king can I give thee my sister in marriage; for thou knowest that my sire would smite me to the dust if I asked him to give the flower of our race to the son of the herdsman Osslah."

"Thou speakest the words of truth. Go home and fear not; but, when thou art king, the sacrifice must be made, and Orna mine. Alas! how can I dare to lift mine eyes to her! But so ordain the dread kings of the night! — who shall gainsay their word?"

"The day that sees me king sees Orna thine," answered the prince.

Morven walked forth, as was his wont, alone; and he said to himself, "The king is old, yet may he live long between me and mine hope!" and he began to cast in his mind how he might shorten the time. Thus absorbed, he wandered on so unheedingly that night advanced, and he had lost his path among the thick woods and knew not how to regain his home. So he lay down quietly beneath a tree, and rested till day dawned; then hunger came upon him, and he searched among the bushes for such simple roots as those with which, for he was ever careless of food, he was used to appease the cravings of nature.

He found, among other more familiar herbs and roots, a red berry of a sweetish taste, which he had never observed before. He ate of it sparingly, and had not proceeded far in the wood before he found his eyes swim, and a deadly sickness came over him. For several hours he lay convulsed on the ground, expecting death; but the gaunt spareness of his frame, and

his unvarying abstinence, prevailed over the poison, and he recovered slowly, and after great anguish. But he went with feeble steps back to the spot where the berries grew, and, plucking several, hid them in his bosom, and by nightfall regained the city.

The next day he went forth among his father's herds, and seizing a lamb, forced some of the berries into his stomach, and the lamb, escaping, ran away, and fell down dead. Then Morven took some more of the berries and boiled them down, and mixed the juice with wine, and he gave the wine in secret to one of his father's servants, and the servant died.

Then Morven sought the king, and coming into his presence, alone, he said unto him, "How fares my lord?"

The king sat on a couch made of the skins of wolves, and his eye was glassy and dim; but vast were his aged limbs, and huge was his stature, and he had been taller by a head than the children of men, and none living could bend the bow he had bent in youth; gray, gaunt, and worn, as some mighty bones that are dug at times from the bosom of the earth,—a relic of the strength of old.

And the king said faintly, and with a ghastly laugh,—

"The men of my years fare ill. What avails my strength? Better had I been born a cripple like thee, so should I have had nothing to lament in growing old."

The red flush passed over Morven's brow; but he bent humbly,—

"O king, what if I could give thee back thy youth? What if I could restore to thee the vigour which distinguished thee above the sons of men, when the warriors of Alrich fell like grass before thy sword?"

Then the king uplifted his dull eyes, and he said,—

"What meanest thou, son of Osslah? Surely I hear much of thy great wisdom, and how thou speakest nightly with the stars. Can the gods of the night give unto thee the secret to make the old young?"

"Tempt them not by doubt," said Morven, reverently. "All things are possible to the rulers of the dark hour; and, lo! the star that loves thy servant spake to him at the

dead of night, and said, 'Arise, and go unto the king; and tell him that the stars honour the tribe of Oestrich, and remember how the king bent his bow against the sons of Alrich; wherefore, look thou under the stone that lies to the right of thy dwelling, even beside the pine tree, and thou shalt see a vessel of clay, and in the vessel thou wilt find a sweet liquid, that shall make the king thy master forget his age forever.' Therefore, my lord, when the morning rose I went forth, and looked under the stone, and behold the vessel of clay; and I have brought it hither to my lord the king."

"Quick, slave, quick! that I may drink and regain my youth!"

"Nay, listen, O king! further said the star to me,—

"'It is only at night, when the stars have power, that this their gift will avail; wherefore the king must wait till the hush of the midnight, when the moon is high, and then may he mingle the liquid with his wine. And he must reveal to none that he hath received the gift from the hand of the servant of the stars. For *THEY* do their work in secret, and when men sleep; therefore they love not the babble of mouths, and he who reveals their benefits shall surely die.'"

"Fear not," said the king, grasping the vessel; "none shall know: and, behold, I will rise on the morrow; and my two sons, wrangling for my crown—verily I shall be younger than they!"

Then the king laughed loud; and he scarcely thanked the servant of the stars, neither did he promise him reward; for the kings in those days had little thought save for themselves.

And Morven said to him, "Shall I not attend my lord?—for without me, perchance, the drug might fail of its effect."

"Ay," said the king, "rest here."

"Nay," replied Morven; "thy servants will marvel and talk much, if they see the son of Osslah sojourning in thy palace. So would the displeasure of the gods of night perchance be incurred. Suffer that the lesser door of the palace be unbarred, so that at the night hour, when the moon is midway

in the heavens, I may steal unseen into thy chamber, and mix the liquid with thy wine."

"So be it," said the king. "Thou art wise, though thy limbs are crooked and curt; and the stars might have chosen a taller man." Then the king laughed again; and Morven laughed too, but there was danger in the mirth of the son of Osslah.

The night had begun to wane, and the inhabitants of Oestrich were buried in deep sleep, when, hark! a sharp voice was heard crying out in the streets, "Woe, woe! Awake, ye sons of Oestrich! woe!" Then forth, wild, haggard, alarmed, spear in hand, rushed the giant sons of the rugged tribe, and they saw a man on a height in the middle of the city, shrieking "Woe!" and it was Morven, the son of Osslah! And he said unto them, as they gathered round him, "Men and warriors, tremble as ye hear. The star of the west hath spoken to me, and thus said the star: 'Evil shall fall upon the kingly house of Oestrich,—yea, ere the morning dawn; wherefore, go thou mourning into the streets, and wake the inhabitants to woe!' So I rose and did the bidding of the star." And while Morven was yet speaking, a servant of the king's house ran up to the crowd, crying loudly, "The king is dead!" So they went into the palace and found the king stark upon his couch, and his huge limbs all cramped and crippled by the pangs of death, and his hands clenched as if in menace of a foe,—the Foe of all living flesh! Then fear came on the gazers, and they looked on Morven with a deeper awe than the boldest warrior would have called forth; and they bore him back to the council-hall of the wise men, wailing and clashing their arms in woe, and shouting, ever and anon, "Honour to Morven the prophet!" And that was the first time the word *PROPHET* was ever used in those countries.

At noon, on the third day from the king's death, Siror sought Morven, and he said, "Lo, my father is no more, and the people meet this evening at sunset to elect his successor, and the warriors and the young men will surely choose my brother, for he is more known in war. Fail me not therefore."

"Peace, boy!" said Morven, sternly; "nor dare to question the truth of the gods of night."

For Morven now began to presume on his power among the people, and to speak as rulers speak, even to the sons of kings; and the voice silenced the fiery Siror, nor dared he to reply.

"Behold," said Morven, taking up a chaplet of coloured plumes, "wear this on thy head, and put on a brave face, for the people like a hopeful spirit, and go down with thy brother to the place where the new king is to be chosen, and leave the rest to the stars. But, above all things, forget not that chaplet; it has been blessed by the gods of night."

The prince took the chaplet and returned home.

It was evening, and the warriors and chiefs of the tribe were assembled in the place where the new king was to be elected. And the voices of the many favoured Prince Voltoch, the brother of Siror, for he had slain twelve foemen with his spear; and verily, in those days, that was a great virtue in a king.

Suddenly there was a shout in the streets, and the people cried out, "Way for Morven the prophet, the prophet!" For the people held the son of Osslah in even greater respect than did the chiefs. Now, since he had become of note, Morven had assumed a majesty of air which the son of the herdsman knew not in his earlier days; and albeit his stature was short, and his limbs halted, yet his countenance was grave and high. He only of the tribe wore a garment that swept the ground, and his head was bare and his long black hair descended to his girdle, and rarely was change or human passion seen in his calm aspect. He feasted not, nor drank wine, nor was his presence frequent in the streets. He laughed not, neither did he smile, save when alone in the forest,—and then he laughed at the follies of his tribe.

So he walked slowly through the crowd, neither turning to the left nor to the right, as the crowd gave way; and he supported his steps with a staff of the knotted pine.

And when he came to the place where the chiefs were met, and the two princes stood in the centre, he bade the people

around him proclaim silence; then mounting on a huge fragment of rock, he thus spake to the multitude:—

“Princes, Warriors, and Bards! ye, O council of the wise men! and ye, O hunters of the forests and snarers of the fishes of the streams! hearken to Morven, the son of Osslah. Ye know that I am lowly of race and weak of limb; but did I not give into your hands the tribe of Alrich, and did ye not slay them in the dead of night with a great slaughter? Surely, ye must know this of himself did not the herdsman’s son; surely he was but the agent of the bright gods that love the children of Oestrich! Three nights since when slumber was on the earth, was not my voice heard in the streets? Did I not proclaim woe to the kingly house of Oestrich? and verily the dark arm had fallen on the bosom of the mighty, that is no more. Could I have dreamed this thing merely in a dream, or was I not as the voice of the bright gods that watch over the tribes of Oestrich? Wherefore, O men and chiefs! scorn not the son of Osslah, but listen to his words; for are they not the wisdom of the stars? Behold, last night, I sat alone in the valley, and the trees were hushed around, and not a breath stirred; and I looked upon the star that counsels the son of Osslah; and I said, ‘Dread conqueror of the cloud! thou that bathest thy beauty in the streams and piercest the pine-boughs with thy presence; behold thy servant grieved because the mighty one hath passed away, and many foes surround the houses of my brethren; and it is well that they should have a king valiant and prosperous in war, the cherished of the stars. Wherefore, O star! as thou gavest into our hands the warriors of Alrich, and didst warn us of the fall of the oak of our tribe, wherefore I pray thee give unto the people a token that they may choose that king whom the gods of the night prefer!’ Then a low voice, sweeter than the music of the bard, stole along the silence. ‘Thy love for thy race is grateful to the stars of night: go, then, son of Osslah, and seek the meeting of the chiefs and the people to choose a king, and tell them not to scorn thee because thou art slow to the chase, and little known in war; for the stars give thee wisdom as a recompense for all. Say unto the people that

as the wise men of the council shape their lessons by the flight of birds, so by the flight of birds shall a token be given unto them, and they shall choose their kings. For, saith the star of night, the birds are the children of the winds, they pass to and fro along the ocean of the air, and visit the clouds that are the war-ships of the gods; and their music is but broken melodies which they glean from the harps above. Are they not the messengers of the storm? Ere the stream chafes against the bank, and the rain descends, know ye not, by the wail of birds and their low circle over the earth, that the tempest is at hand? Wherefore, wisely do ye deem that the children of the air are the fit interpreters between the sons of men and the lords of the world above. Say then to the people and the chiefs that they shall take, from among the doves that build their nests in the roof of the palace, a white dove, and they shall let it loose in the air, and verily the gods of the night shall deem the dove as a prayer coming from the people, and they shall send a messenger to grant the prayer and give to the tribes of Oestrich a king worthy of themselves.'

"With that the star spoke no more."

Then the friends of Voltoch murmured among themselves, and they said, "Shall this man dictate to us who shall be king?" But the people and the warriors shouted, "Listen to the star; do we not give or deny battle according as the bird flies,—shall we not by the same token choose him by whom the battle should be led?" And the thing seemed natural to them, for it was after the custom of the tribe. Then they took one of the doves that built in the roof of the palace, and they brought it to the spot where Morven stood, and he, looking up to the stars and muttering to himself, released the bird.

There was a copse of trees at a little distance from the spot, and as the dove ascended, a hawk suddenly rose from the copse and pursued the dove; and the dove was terrified, and soared circling high above the crowd, when lo, the hawk, poising itself one moment on its wings, swooped with a sudden

swoop, and, abandoning its prey, alighted on the plumed head of Siror.

"Behold," cried Morven in a loud voice, "behold your king!"

"Hail, all hail the king!" shouted the people. "All hail the chosen of the stars!"

Then Morven lifted his right hand and the hawk left the prince and alighted on Morven's shoulder. "Bird of the gods!" said he, reverently, "hast thou not a secret message for my ear?" Then the hawk put its beak to Morven's ear, and Morven bowed his head submissively; and the hawk rested with Morven from that moment and would not be scared away. And Morven said, "The stars have sent me this bird, that in the day-time when I see them not, we may never be without a councillor in distress."

So Siror was made king and Morven the son of Osslah was constrained by the king's will to take Orna for his wife; and the people and the chiefs honoured Morven the prophet above all the elders of the tribe.

One day Morven said unto himself, musing, "Am I not already equal with the king,—nay, is not the king my servant? Did I not place him over the heads of his brothers? Am I not, therefore, more fit to reign than he is; shall I not push him from his seat? It is a troublesome and stormy office to reign over the wild men of Oestrich, to feast in the crowded hall, and to lead the warriors to the fray. Surely if I feasted not, neither went out to war, they might say, 'This is no king, but the cripple Morven;' and some of the race of Siror might slay me secretly. But can I not be greater far than kings, and continue to choose and govern them, living as now at mine own ease? Verily the stars shall give me a new palace, and many subjects."

Among the wise men was Darvan; and Morven feared him, for his eye often sought the movements of the son of Osslah.

And Morven said, "It were better to *trust* this man than to *blind*, for surely I want a helpmate and a friend." So he said to the wise man as he sat alone watching the setting sun,—

"It seemeth to me, O Darvan! that we ought to build a great pile in honour of the stars, and the pile should be more glorious than all the palaces of the chiefs and the palace of the king; for are not the stars our masters? And thou and I should be the chief dwellers in this new palace, and we would serve the gods of night and fatten their altars with the choicest of the herd and the freshest of the fruits of the earth."

And Darvan said, "Thou speakest as becomes the servant of the stars. But will the people help to build the pile? For they are a warlike race and they love not toil."

And Morven answered, "Doubtless the stars will ordain the work to be done. Fear not."

"In truth thou art a wondrous man; thy words ever come to pass," answered Darvan; "and I wish thou wouldest teach me, friend, the language of the stars."

"Assuredly if thou servest me, thou shalt know," answered the proud Morven; and Darvan was secretly wroth that the son of the herdsman should command the service of an elder and a chief.

And when Morven returned to his wife he found her weeping much. Now she loved the son of Osslah with an exceeding love, for he was not savage and fierce as the men she had known, and she was proud of his fame among the tribe; and he took her in his arms and kissed her, and asked her why she wept. Then she told him that her brother the king had visited her, and had spoken bitter words of Morven: "He taketh from me the affection of my people," said Siror, "and blindeth them with lies. And since he hath made me king, what if he take my kingdom from me? Verily a new tale of the stars might undo the old." And the king had ordered her to keep watch on Morven's secrecy, and to see whether truth was in him when he boasted of his commune with the Powers of night.

But Orna loved Morven better than Siror, therefore she told her husband all.

And Morven resented the king's ingratitude, and was troubled much, for a king is a powerful foe; but he comforted Orna, and bade her dissemble, and complain also of him to

her brother, so that he might confide to her unsuspectingly whatsoever he might design against Morven.

There was a cave by Morven's house in which he kept the sacred hawk, and wherein he secretly trained and nurtured other birds against future need; and the door of the cave was always barred. And one day he was thus engaged when he beheld a chink in the wall that he had never noted before, and the sun came playfully in; and while he looked he perceived the sunbeam was darkened, and presently he saw a human face peering in through the chink. And Morven trembled, for he knew he had been watched. He ran hastily from the cave; but the spy had disappeared among the trees, and Morven went straight to the chamber of Darvan and sat himself down. And Darvan did not return home till late, and he started and turned pale when he saw Morven. But Morven greeted him as a brother, and bade him to a feast, which, for the first time, he purposed giving at the full of the moon, in honour of the stars. And going out of Darvan's chamber he returned to his wife, and bade her rend her hair, and go at the dawn of day to the king her brother, and complain bitterly of Morven's treatment, and pluck the black plans from the breast of the king. "For surely," said he, "Darvan hath lied to thy brother, and some evil waits me that I would fain know."

So the next morning Orna sought the king, and she said, "The herdsman's son hath reviled me, and spoken harsh words to me; shall I not be avenged?"

Then the king stamped his feet and shook his mighty sword. "Surely thou shalt be avenged; for I have learned from one of the elders that which convinceth me that the man hath lied to the people, and the base-born shall surely die. Yea, the first time that he goeth alone into the forest my brother and I will fall upon him and smite him to the death." And with this comfort Siror dismissed Orna.

And Orna flung herself at the feet of her husband. "Fly now, O my beloved! — fly into the forests afar from my brethren, or surely the sword of Siror will end thy days."

Then the son of Osslah folded his arms, and seemed buried

in black thoughts; nor did he heed the voice of Orna, until again and again she had implored him to fly.

"Fly!" he said at length. "Nay, I was doubting what punishment the stars should pour down upon our foe. Let warriors fly. Morven the prophet conquers by arms mightier than the sword."

Nevertheless Morven was perplexed in his mind, and knew not how to save himself from the vengeance of the king. Now, while he was musing hopelessly he heard a roar of waters; and behold, the river, for it was now the end of autumn, had burst its bounds, and was rushing along the valley to the houses of the city. And now the men of the tribe, and the women, and the children, came running, and with shrieks, to Morven's house, crying, "Behold, the river has burst upon us! Save us, O ruler of the stars!"

Then the sudden thought broke upon Morven, and he resolved to risk his fate upon one desperate scheme.

And he came out from the house calm and sad, and he said, "Ye know not what ye ask; I cannot save ye from this peril: ye have brought it on yourselves." And they cried, "How? O son of Osslah! We are ignorant of our crime."

And he answered, "Go down to the king's palace and wait before it, and surely I will follow ye, and ye shall learn wherefore ye have incurred this punishment from the gods." Then the crowd rolled murmuring back, as a receding sea; and when it was gone from the place, Morven went alone to the house of Darvan, which was next his own. And Darvan was greatly terrified; for he was of a great age, and had no children, neither friends, and he feared that he could not of himself escape the waters.

And Morven said to him soothingly, "Lo, the people love me, and I will see that thou art saved; for verily thou hast been friendly to me, and done me much service with the king."

And as he thus spake, Morven opened the door of the house and looked forth, and saw that they were quite alone. Then he seized the old man by the throat and ceased not his gripe till he was quite dead; and leaving the body of the elder on

the floor, Morven stole from the house and shut the gate. And as he was going to his cave he mused a little while, when, hearing the mighty roar of the waves advancing, and far off the shrieks of women, he lifted up his head and said proudly, "No, in this hour terror alone shall be my slave; I will use no art save the power of my soul." So, leaning on his pine-staff, he strode down to the palace. And it was now evening, and many of the men held torches, that they might see each other's faces in the universal fear. Red flashed the quivering flames on the dark robes and pale front of Morven; and he seemed mightier than the rest, because his face alone was calm amidst the tumult. And louder and hoarser became the roar of the waters; and swift rushed the shades of night over the hastening tide.

And Morven said in a stern voice, "Where is the king; and wherefore is he absent from his people in the hour of dread?" Then the gate of the palace opened, and, behold, Siror was sitting in the hall by the vast pine-fire, and his brother by his side, and his chiefs around him: for they would not deign to come amongst the crowd at the bidding of the herdsman's son.

Then Morven, standing upon a rock above the heads of the people (the same rock whereon he had proclaimed the king), thus spake:—

"Ye desired to know, O sons of Oestrich! wherefore the river hath burst its bounds, and the peril hath come upon you. Learn, then, that the stars resent as the foulest of human crimes an insult to their servants and delegates below. Ye are all aware of the manner of life of Morven, whom ye have surnamed the Prophet! He harms not man nor beast; he lives alone; and, far from the wild joys of the warrior tribe, he worships in awe and fear the Powers of Night. So is he able to advise ye of the coming danger,—so is he able to save ye from the foe. Thus are your huntsmen swift and your warriors bold; and thus do your cattle bring forth their young, and the earth its fruits. What think ye, and what do ye ask to hear? Listen, men of Oestrich!—they have laid snares for my life; and there are amongst you those who

have whetted the sword against the bosom that is only filled with love for you all. Therefore have the stern lords of heaven loosened the chains of the river; therefore doth this evil menace ye. Neither will it pass away until they who dug the pit for the servant of the stars are buried in the same."

Then, by the red torches, the faces of the men looked fierce and threatening; and ten thousand voices shouted forth, "Name them who conspired against thy life, O holy prophet, and surely they shall be torn limb from limb."

And Morven turned aside, and they saw that he wept bitterly; and he said,—

"Ye have asked me, and I have answered: but now scarce will ye believe the foe that I have provoked against me; and by the heavens themselves I swear, that if my death would satisfy their fury, nor bring down upon yourselves and your children's children the anger of the throned stars, gladly would I give my bosom to the knife. Yes," he cried, lifting up his voice, and pointing his shadowy arm towards the hall where the king sat by the pine-fire,— "yes, thou whom by my voice the stars chose above thy brother; yes, Siror, the guilty one! take thy sword, and come hither; strike, if thou hast the heart to strike, the Prophet of the Gods!"

The king started to his feet, and the crowd were hushed in a shuddering silence.

Morven resumed:—

"Know then, O men of Oestrich, that Siror and Voltoch his brother, and Darvan the elder of the wise men, have purposed to slay your prophet, even at such hour as when alone he seeks the shade of the forest to devise new benefits for you. Let the king deny it, if he can!"

Then Voltoch, of the giant limbs, strode forth from the hall, and his spear quivered in his hand.

"Rightly hast thou spoken, base son of my father's herdsman! and for thy sins shalt thou surely die; for thou liest when thou speakest of thy power with the stars, and thou laughest at the folly of them who hear thee: wherefore put him to death."

Then the chiefs in the hall clashed their arms, and rushed forth to slay the son of Osslah.

But he, stretching his unarmed hands on high, exclaimed, "Hear him, O dread ones of the night! Hark how he blasphemeth!"

Then the crowd took up the word, and cried, "He blasphemeth! he blasphemeth against the prophet!"

But the king and the chiefs, who hated Morven because of his power with the people, rushed into the crowd; and the crowd were irresolute, nor knew they how to act, for never yet had they rebelled against their chiefs, and they feared alike the prophet and the king.

And Siror cried, "Summon Darvan to us, for he hath watched the steps of Morven, and he shall lift the veil from my people's eyes." Then three of the swift of foot started forth to the house of Darvan.

And Morven cried out with a loud voice, "Hark! thus saith the star, who, now riding through yonder cloud, breaks forth upon my eyes, 'For the lie that the elder hath uttered against my servant, the curse of the stars shall fall upon him.' Seek, and as ye find him so may ye find ever the foes of Morven and the gods!"

A chill and an icy fear fell over the crowd, and even the cheek of Siror grew pale; and Morven, erect and dark above the waving torches, stood motionless with folded arms. And hark! — far and fast came on the war-steeds of the wave; the people heard them marching to the land, and tossing their white manes in the roaring wind.

"Lo, as ye listen," said Morven, calmly, "the river sweeps on. Haste, for the gods will have a victim, be it your prophet or your king."

"Slave!" shouted Siror, and his spear left his hand, and far above the heads of the crowd sped hissing beside the dark form of Morven, and rent the trunk of the oak behind. Then the people, wroth at the danger of their beloved seer, uttered a wild yell, and gathered round him with brandished swords, facing their chieftains and their king. But at that instant, ere the war had broken forth among the tribe, the three war-

riors returned, and they bore Darvan on their shoulders, and laid him at the feet of the king, and they said tremblingly, "Thus found we the elder in the centre of his own hall." And the people saw that Darvan was a corpse, and that the prediction of Morven was thus verified. "So perish the enemies of Morven and the stars!" cried the son of Osslah. And the people echoed the cry. Then the fury of Siror was at its height, and waving his sword above his head he plunged into the crowd, "Thy blood, baseborn, or mine!"

"So be it!" answered Morven, quailing not. "People, smite the blasphemer! Hark how the river pours down upon your children and your hearths! On, on, or ye perish!"

And Siror fell, pierced by five hundred spears.

"Smite! smite!" cried Morven, as the chiefs of the royal house gathered round the king. And the clash of swords, and the gleam of spears, and the cries of the dying, and the yell of the trampling people mingled with the roar of the elements, and the voices of the rushing wave.

Three hundred of the chiefs perished that night by the swords of their own tribe; and the last cry of the victors was, "Morven the prophet! *Morven the king!*"

And the son of Osslah, seeing the waves now spreading over the valley, led Orna his wife, and the men of Oestrich, their women, and their children, to a high mount, where they waited the dawning sun. But Orna sat apart and wept bitterly, for her brothers were no more, and her race had perished from the earth. And Morven sought to comfort her in vain.

When the morning rose, they saw that the river had overspread the greater part of the city, and now stayed its course among the hollows of the vale. Then Morven said to the people, "The star-kings are avenged, and their wrath appeased. Tarry only here until the waters have melted into the crevices of the soil." And on the fourth day they returned to the city, and no man dared to name another, save Morven, as the king.

But Morven retired into his cave and mused deeply; and then assembling the people, he gave them new laws; and he

made them build a mighty temple in honour of the stars, and made them heap within it all that the tribe held most precious. And he took unto him fifty children from the most famous of the tribe; and he took also ten from among the men who had served him best, and he ordained that they should serve the stars in the great temple: and Morven was their chief. And he put away the crown they pressed upon him, and he chose from among the elders a new king. And he ordained that henceforth the servants only of the stars in the great temple should elect the king and the rulers, and hold council, and proclaim war; but he suffered the king to feast, and to hunt, and to make merry in the banquet-halls. And Morven built altars in the temple, and was the first who, in the North, sacrificed the beast and the bird, and afterwards human flesh, upon the altars. And he drew auguries from the entrails of the victim, and made schools for the science of the prophet; and Morven's piety was the wonder of the tribe,—in that he refused to be a king. And Morven the high priest was ten thousand times mightier than the king. He taught the people to till the ground and to sow the herb; and by his wisdom, and the valour that his prophecies instilled into men, he conquered all the neighbouring tribes. And the sons of Oestrich spread themselves over a mighty empire, and with them spread the name and the laws of Morven. And in every province which he conquered, he ordered them to build a temple to the stars.

But a heavy sorrow fell upon the fears of Morven. The sister of Siror bowed down her head, and survived not long the slaughter of her race. And she left Morven childless. And he mourned bitterly and as one distraught, for her only in the world had his heart the power to love. And he sat down and covered his face, saying:—

“Lo! I have toiled and travailed; and never before in the world did man conquer what I have conquered. Verily the empire of the iron thews and the giant limbs is no more! I have founded a new power, that henceforth shall sway the lands,—the empire of a plotting brain and a commanding mind. But, behold! my fate is barren, and I feel already

that it will grow neither fruit nor tree as a shelter to mine old age. Desolate and lonely shall I pass unto my grave. O Orna! my beautiful! my loved! none were like unto thee, and to thy love do I owe my glory and my life! Would for thy sake, O sweet bird! that nestled in the dark cavern of my heart,— would for thy sake that thy brethren had been spared, for verily with my life would I have purchased thine. Alas! only when I lost thee did I find that thy love was dearer to me than the fear of others!" And Morven mourned night and day, and none might comfort him.

But from that time forth he gave himself solely up to the cares of his calling; and his nature and his affections, and whatever there was yet left soft in him, grew hard like stone; and he was a man without love, and he forbade love and marriage to the priest.

Now, in his latter years, there arose *other* prophets; for the world had grown wiser even by Morven's wisdom, and some did say unto themselves, "Behold Morven, the herdsman's son, is a king of kings: this did the stars for their servant; shall we not also be servants to the star?"

And they wore black garments like Morven, and went about prophesying of what the stars foretold them. And Morven was exceeding wroth; for he, more than other men, knew that the prophets lied. Wherefore he went forth against them with the ministers of the temple, and he took them, and burned them by a slow fire; for thus said Morven to the people: "A true prophet hath honour, but *I* only am a true prophet; to all false prophets there shall be surely death."

And the people applauded the piety of the son of Osslah.

And Morven educated the wisest of the children in the mysteries of the temple, so that they grew up to succeed him worthily.

And he died full of years and honour; and they carved his effigy on a mighty stone before the temple, and the effigy endured for a thousand ages, and whoso looked on it trembled; for the face was calm with the calmness of unspeakable awe!

And Morven was the first mortal of the North that made Religion the stepping-stone to Power. Of a surety Morven was a great man!

It was the last night of the old year, and the stars sat, each upon his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. The night was dark and troubled, the dread winds were abroad, and fast and frequent hurried the clouds beneath the thrones of the kings of night. And ever and anon fiery meteors flashed along the depths of heaven, and were again swallowed up in the grave of darkness. But far below his brethren, and with a lurid haze around his orb, sat the discontented star that had watched over the hunters of the North.

And on the lowest abyss of space there was spread a thick and mighty gloom, from which, as from a caldron, rose columns of wreathing smoke; and still, when the great winds rested for an instant on their paths, voices of woe and laughter, mingled with shrieks, were heard booming from the abyss to the upper air.

And now, in the midst of night, a vast figure rose slowly from the abyss, and its wings threw blackness over the world. High upward to the throne of the discontented star sailed the fearful shape, and the star trembled on his throne when the form stood before him face to face.

And the shape said, "Hail, brother! all hail!"

"I know thee not," answered the star; "thou art not the archangel that visitest the kings of night."

And the shape laughed loud. "I am the fallen star of the morning! I am Lucifer, thy brother! Hast thou not, O sullen king, served me and mine; and hast thou not wrested the earth from thy Lord who sittest above, and given it to me, by darkening the souls of men with the religion of fear? Wherefore come, brother, come; thou hast a throne prepared beside my own in the fiery gloom. Come! The heavens are no more for thee!"

Then the star rose from his throne, and descended to the side of Lucifer; for ever hath the spirit of discontent had

sympathy with the soul of pride. And they sank slowly down to the gulf of gloom.

It was the first night of the new year, and the stars sat each on his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. But sorrow dimmed the bright faces of the kings of night, for they mourned in silence and in fear for a fallen brother.

And the gates of the heaven of heavens flew open with a golden sound, and the swift archangel fled down on his silent wings; and the archangel gave to each of the stars, as before, the message of his Lord, and to each star was his appointed charge. And when the heraldry seemed done there came a laugh from the abyss of gloom, and half-way from the gulf rose the lurid shape of Lucifer the fiend!

"Thou countest thy flock ill, O radiant shepherd! Behold! one star is missing from the three thousand and ten!"

"Back to thy gulf, false Lucifer! — the throne of thy brother hath been filled."

And, lo! as the archangel spake, the stars beheld a young and all-lustrous stranger on the throne of the erring star; and his face was so soft to look upon that the dimmest of human eyes might have gazed upon its splendour unabashed: but the dark fiend alone was dazzled by its lustre, and, with a yell that shook the flaming pillars of the universe, he plunged backward into the gloom.

Then, far and sweet from the arch unseen, came forth the voice of God,—

"Behold! on the throne of the discontented star sits the star of Hope; and he that breathed into mankind the religion of Fear hath a successor in him who shall teach earth the religion of Love!"

And evermore the star of Fear dwells with Lucifer, and the star of Love keeps vigil in heaven!

CHAPTER XX.

GLENHAUSEN. — THE POWER OF LOVE IN SANCTIFIED PLACES.

— A PORTRAIT OF FREDERICK BARBAROSSA. — THE AMBITION OF MEN FINDS NO ADEQUATE SYMPATHY IN WOMEN.

"You made me tremble for you more than once," said Gertrude to the student; "I feared you were about to touch upon ground really sacred, but your end redeemed all."

"The false religion always tries to counterfeit the garb, the language, the aspect of the true," answered the German; "for that reason, I purposely suffered my tale to occasion that very fear and anxiety you speak of, conscious that the most scrupulous would be contented when the whole was finished."

This German was one of a new school, of which England as yet knows nothing. We shall see hereafter what it will produce.

The student left them at Friedberg, and our travellers proceeded to Glenhausen, — a spot interesting to lovers; for here Frederick the First was won by the beauty of Gela, and, in the midst of an island vale, he built the Imperial Palace, in honour of the lady of his love. This spot is, indeed, well chosen of itself; the mountains of the Rhinegebürg close it in with the green gloom of woods and the glancing waters of the Kinz.

"Still, wherever we go," said Trevelyman, "we find all tradition is connected with love; and history, for that reason, hallows less than romance."

"It is singular," said Vane, moralizing, "that love makes but a small part of our actual lives, but is yet the master-key to our sympathies. The hardest of us, who laugh at the passion when they see it palpably before them, are arrested by some dim tradition of its existence in the past. It is as if life had few opportunities of bringing out certain qualities

within us, so that they always remain untold and dormant, susceptible to thought, but deaf to action."

"You refine and mystify too much," said Trevlyyan, smiling; "none of us have any faculty, any passion, uncalled forth, if we have *really* loved, though but for a day."

Gertrude smiled, and drawing her arm within his, Trevlyyan left Vane to philosophize on passion, — a fit occupation for one who had never felt it.

"Here let us pause," said Trevlyyan, afterwards, as they visited the remains of the ancient palace, and the sun glittered on the scene, "to recall the old chivalric day of the gallant Barbarossa; let us suppose him commencing the last great action of his life; let us picture him as setting out for the Holy Land. Imagine him issuing from those walls on his white charger,—his fiery eye somewhat dimmed by years, and his hair blanched; but nobler from the impress of time itself,—the clang of arms; the tramp of steeds; banners on high; music pealing from hill to hill; the red cross and the nodding plume; the sun, as now glancing on yonder trees; and thence reflected from the burnished arms of the Crusaders. But, Gela —"

"Ah," said Gertrude, "*she* must be no more; for she would have outlived her beauty, and have found that glory had now no rival in his breast. Glory consoles men for the death of the loved; but glory is infidelity to the living."

"Nay, not so, dearest Gertrude," said Trevlyyan, quickly; "for my darling dream of Fame is the hope of laying its honours at your feet! And if ever, in future years, I should rise above the herd, I should only ask if *your* step were proud and *your* heart elated."

"I was wrong," said Gertrude, with tears in her eyes; "and for your sake I can be ambitious."

Perhaps there, too, she was mistaken; for one of the common disappointments of the heart is, that women have so rarely a sympathy in our better and higher aspirings. Their ambition is not for great things; they cannot understand that desire "which scorns delight, and loves laborious days." If they love us, they usually exact too much. They are jealous

of the ambition to which we sacrifice so largely, and which divides us from them; and they leave the stern passion of great minds to the only solitude which affection cannot share. To aspire is to be alone!

CHAPTER XXI.

VIEW OF EHRENBREITSTEIN. — A NEW ALARM IN GER-
TRUDE'S HEALTH. — TRARBACH.

ANOTHER time our travellers proceeded from Coblentz to Treves, following the course of the Moselle. They stopped on the opposite bank below the bridge that unites Coblentz with the Petersberg, to linger over the superb view of Ehrenbreitstein which you may there behold.

It was one of those calm noonday scenes which impress upon us their own bright and voluptuous tranquillity. There stood the old herdsman leaning on his staff, and the quiet cattle knee-deep in the gliding waters. Never did stream more smooth and sheen than was at that hour the surface of the Moselle mirror the images of the pastoral life. Beyond, the darker shadows of the bridge and of the walls of Coblentz fell deep over the waves, checkered by the tall sails of the craft that were moored around the harbour. But clear against the sun rose the spires and roofs of Coblentz, backed by many a hill sloping away to the horizon. High, dark, and massive, on the opposite bank, swelled the towers and rock of Ehrenbreitstein,—a type of that great chivalric spirit—the honour that the rock arrogates for its name—which demands so many sacrifices of blood and tears, but which ever creates in the restless heart of man a far deeper interest than the more peaceful scenes of life by which it is contrasted. There, still—from the calm waters, and the abodes of common toil and ordinary pleasure—turns the aspiring mind! Still as we gaze on that lofty and immemorial rock we recall the famine and the siege; and own that the more daring crimes of men

have a strange privilege in hallowing the very spot which they devastate.

Below, in green curves and mimic bays covered with herbage, the gradual banks mingled with the water; and just where the bridge closed, a solitary group of trees, standing dark in the thickest shadow, gave that melancholy feature to the scene which resembles the one dark thought that often forces itself into our sunniest hours. Their boughs stirred not; no voice of birds broke the stillness of their gloomy verdure: the eye turned from them, as from the sad moral that belongs to existence.

In proceeding to Trarbach, Gertrude was seized with another of those fainting fits which had so terrified Trevlyan before; they stopped an hour or two at a little village, but Gertrude rallied with such apparent rapidity, and so strongly insisted on proceeding, that they reluctantly continued their way. This event would have thrown a gloom over their journey, if Gertrude had not exerted herself to dispel the impression she had occasioned; and so light, so cheerful, were her spirits, that for the time at least she succeeded.

They arrived at Trarbach late at noon. This now small and humble town is said to have been the *Thronus Bacchi* of the ancients. From the spot where the travellers halted to take, as it were, their impression of the town, they saw before them the little hostelry, a poor pretender to the *Thronus Bacchi*, with the rude sign of the Holy Mother over the door. The peaked roof, the sunk window, the gray walls, checkered with the rude beams of wood so common to the meaner houses on the Continent, bore something of a melancholy and prepossessing aspect. Right above, with its Gothic windows and venerable spire, rose the church of the town; and, crowning the summit of a green and almost perpendicular mountain, scowled the remains of one of those mighty castles which make the never-failing frown on a German landscape.

The scene was one of quiet and of gloom: the exceeding serenity of the day contrasted, with an almost unpleasing brightness, the poverty of the town, the thinness of the population, and the dreary grandeur of the ruins that over-

hung the capital of the perished race of the bold Counts of Spanheim.

They passed the night at Trarbach, and continued their journey next day. At Treves, Gertrude was for some days seriously ill; and when they returned to Coblentz, her disease had evidently received a rapid and alarming increase.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DOUBLE LIFE. — TREVYLYAN'S FATE. — SORROW THE PARENT OF FAME. — NIEDERLAHNSTEIN. — DREAMS.

THERE are two lives to each of us, gliding on at the same time, scarcely connected with each other,—the life of our actions, the life of our minds; the external and the inward history; the movements of the frame, the deep and ever-restless workings of the heart! They who have loved know that there is a diary of the affections, which we might keep for years without having occasion even to touch upon the exterior surface of life, our busy occupations, the mechanical progress of our existence; yet by the last are we judged, the first is never known. History reveals men's deeds, men's outward character, but *not themselves*. There is a secret self that hath its own life "rounded by a dream," unpenetrated, unguessed. What passed within Trevelyman, hour after hour, as he watched over the declining health of the only being in the world whom his proud heart had been ever destined to love? His real record of the time was marked by every cloud upon Gertrude's brow, every smile of her countenance, every—the faintest—alteration in her disease; yet, to the outward seeming, all this vast current of varying eventful emotion lay dark and un conjectured. He filled up with wonted regularity the colourings of existence, and smiled and moved as other men. For still, in the heroism with which devotion conquers self, he sought only to cheer and gladden the young heart on which

he had embarked his all; and he kept the dark tempest of his anguish for the solitude of night.

That was a peculiar doom which Fate had reserved for him; and casting him, in after years, on the great sea of public strife, it seemed as if she were resolved to tear from his heart all yearnings for the land. For him there was to be no green or sequestered spot in the valley of household peace. His bark was to know no haven, and his soul not even the desire of rest. For action is that Lethe in which alone we forget our former dreams, and the mind that, too stern not to wrestle with its emotions, seeks to conquer regret, must leave itself no leisure to look behind. Who knows what benefits to the world may have sprung from the sorrows of the benefactor? As the harvest that gladdens mankind in the suns of autumn was called forth by the rains of spring, so the griefs of youth may make the fame of maturity.

Gertrude, charmed by the beauties of the river, desired to continue the voyage to Mayence. The rich Trevlyan persuaded the physician who had attended her to accompany them, and they once more pursued their way along the banks of the feudal Rhine. For what the Tiber is to the classic, the Rhine is to the chivalric age. The steep rock and the gray dismantled tower, the massive and rude picturesque of the feudal days, constitute the great features of the scene; and you might almost fancy, as you glide along, that you are sailing back adown the river of Time, and the monuments of the pomp and power of old, rising, one after one, upon its shores!

Vane and Du——e, the physician, at the farther end of the vessel, conversed upon stones and strata, in that singular pedantry of science which strips nature to a skeleton, and prowls among the dead bones of the world, unconscious of its living beauty.

They left Gertrude and Trevlyan to themselves; and, "bending o'er the vessel's laving side," they indulged in silence the melancholy with which each was imbued. For Gertrude began to waken, though doubtingly and at intervals, to a sense of the short span that was granted to her life; and over the loveliness around her there floated that sad and in-

effable interest which springs from the presentiment of our own death. They passed the rich island of Oberwerth, and Hochheim, famous for its ruby grape, and saw, from his mountain bed, the Lahn bear his tribute of fruits and corn into the treasury of the Rhine. Proudly rose the tower of Niederlahnstein, and deeply lay its shadow along the stream. It was late noon; the cattle had sought the shade from the slanting sun, and, far beyond, the holy castle of Marksburg raised its battlements above mountains covered with the vine. On the water two boats had been drawn alongside each other; and from one, now moving to the land, the splash of oars broke the general stillness of the tide. Fast by an old tower the fishermen were busied in their craft, but the sound of their voices did not reach the ear. It was life, but a silent life, suited to the tranquillity of noon.

"There is something in travel," said Gertrude, "which constantly, even amidst the most retired spots, impresses us with the exuberance of life. We come to those quiet nooks and find a race whose existence we never dreamed of. In their humble path they know the same passions and tread the same career as ourselves. The mountains shut them out from the great world, but their village is a world in itself. And they know and heed no more of the turbulent scenes of remote cities than our own planet of the inhabitants of the distant stars. What then is death, but the forgetfulness of some few hearts added to the general unconsciousness of our existence that pervades the universe? The bubble breaks in the vast desert of the air without a sound."

"Why talk of death?" said Trevylyan, with a writhing smile. "These sunny scenes should not call forth such melancholy images."

"Melancholy," repeated Gertrude, mechanically. "Yes, death is indeed melancholy when we are loved!"

They stayed a short time at Niederlahnstein, for Vane was anxious to examine the minerals that the Lahn brings into the Rhine; and the sun was waning towards its close as they renewed their voyage. As they sailed slowly on, Gertrude said, "How like a dream is this sentiment of existence, when,

without labour or motion, every change of scene is brought before us; and if I am with you, dearest, I do not feel it less resembling a dream, for I have dreamed of you lately more than ever; and dreams have become a part of my life itself."

"Speaking of dreams," said Trevelyán, as they pursued that mysterious subject, "I once during my former residence in Germany fell in with a singular enthusiast, who had taught himself what he termed 'A System of Dreaming.' When he first spoke to me upon it I asked him to explain what he meant, which he did somewhat in the following words."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LIFE OF DREAMS.

"I WAS born," said he, "with many of the sentiments of the poet, but without the language to express them; my feelings were constantly chilled by the intercourse of the actual world. My family, mere Germans, dull and unimpassioned, had nothing in common with me; nor did I out of my family find those with whom I could better sympathize. I was revolted by friendships,—for they were susceptible to every change; I was disappointed in love,—for the truth never approached to my ideal. Nursed early in the lap of Romance, enamoured of the wild and the adventurous, the common-places of life were to me inexpressibly tame and joyless. And yet indolence, which belongs to the poetical character, was more inviting than that eager and uncontemplative action which can alone wring enterprise from life. Meditation was my natural element. I loved to spend the noon reclined by some shady stream, and in a half sleep to shape images from the glancing sunbeams. A dim and unreal order of philosophy, that belongs to our nation, was my favourite intellectual pursuit; and I sought amongst the Obscure and the Recondite the variety and emotion I could not find in the Familiar.

Thus constantly watching the operations of the inner mind, it occurred to me at last that sleep having its own world, but as yet a rude and fragmentary one, it might be possible to shape from its chaos all those combinations of beauty, of power, of glory, and of love, which were denied to me in the world in which my frame walked and had its being. So soon as this idea came upon me, I nursed and cherished and mused over it, till I found that the imagination began to effect the miracle I desired. By brooding ardently, intensely, before I retired to rest, over any especial train of thought, over any ideal creations; by keeping the body utterly still and quiescent during the whole day; by shutting out all living adventure, the memory of which might perplex and interfere with the stream of events that I desired to pour forth into the wilds of sleep, I discovered at last that I could lead in dreams a life solely their own, and utterly distinct from the life of day. Towers and palaces, all my heritage and seignury, rose before me from the depths of night; I quaffed from jewelled cups the Falernian of imperial vaults; music from harps of celestial tone filled up the crevices of air; and the smiles of immortal beauty flushed like sunlight over all. Thus the adventure and the glory that I could not for my waking life obtain, was obtained for me in sleep. I wandered with the gryphon and the gnome; I sounded the horn at enchanted portals; I conquered in the knightly lists; I planted my standard over battlements huge as the painter's birth of Babylon itself.

"But I was afraid to call forth one shape on whose loveliness to pour all the hidden passion of my soul. I trembled lest my sleep should present me some image which it could never restore, and, waking from which, even the new world I had created might be left desolate forever. I shuddered lest I should adore a vision which the first ray of morning could smite to the grave.

"In this train of mind I began to wonder whether it might not be possible to connect dreams together; to supply the thread that was wanting; to make one night continue the history of the other, so as to bring together the same shapes and the same

scenes, and thus lead a connected and harmonious life, not only in the one half of existence, but in the other, the richer and more glorious half. No sooner did this idea present itself to me, than I burned to accomplish it. I had before taught myself that Faith is the great creator; that to believe fervently is to make belief true. So I would not suffer my mind to doubt the practicability of its scheme. I shut myself up then entirely by day, refused books, and hated the very sun, and compelled all my thoughts (and sleep is the mirror of thought) to glide in one direction,—the direction of my dreams,—so that from night to night the imagination might keep up the thread of action, and I might thus lie down full of the past dream and confident of the sequel. Not for one day only, or for one month, did I pursue this system, but I continued it zealously and sternly till at length it began to succeed. Who shall tell," cried the enthusiast,—I see him now with his deep, bright, sunken eyes, and his wild hair thrown backward from his brow,—“the rapture I experienced, when first, faintly and half distinct, I perceived the harmony I had invoked dawn upon my dreams? At first there was only a partial and desultory connection between them; my eye recognized certain shapes, my ear certain tones common to each; by degrees these augmented in number, and were more defined in outline. At length one fair face broke forth from among the ruder forms and night after night appeared mixing with them for a moment and then vanishing, just as the mariner watches, in a clouded sky, the moon shining through the drifting rack, and quickly gone. My curiosity was now vividly excited; the face, with its lustrous eyes and seraph features, roused all the emotions that no living shape had called forth. I became enamoured of a dream, and as the statue to the Cyprian was my creation to me; so from this intent and unceasing passion I at length worked out my reward. My dream became more palpable; I spoke with it; I knelt to it; my lips were pressed to its own; we exchanged the vows of love, and morning only separated us with the certainty that at night we should meet again. Thus then," continued my visionary, "I commenced a history utterly separ-

rate from the history of the world, and it went on alternately with my harsh and chilling history of the day, equally regular and equally continuous. And what, you ask, was that history? Methought I was a prince in some Eastern island that had no features in common with the colder north of my native home. By day I looked upon the dull walls of a German town, and saw homely or squalid forms passing before me; the sky was dim and the sun cheerless. Night came on with her thousand stars, and brought me the dews of sleep. Then suddenly there was a new world; the richest fruits hung from the trees in clusters of gold and purple. Palaces of the quaint fashion of the sunnier climes, with spiral minarets and glittering cupolas, were mirrored upon vast lakes sheltered by the palm-tree and banana. The sun seemed a different orb, so mellow and gorgeous were his beams; birds and winged things of all hues fluttered in the shining air; the faces and garments of men were not of the northern regions of the world, and their voices spoke a tongue which, strange at first, by degrees I interpreted. Sometimes I made war upon neighbouring kings; sometimes I chased the spotted pard through the vast gloom of immemorial forests; my life was at once a life of enterprise and pomp. But above all there was the history of my love! I thought there were a thousand difficulties in the way of attaining its possession. Many were the rocks I had to scale, and the battles to wage, and the fortresses to storm, in order to win her as my bride. But at last" (continued the enthusiast), "*she is won, she is my own!* Time in that wild world, which I visit nightly, passes not so slowly as in this, and yet an hour may be the same as a year. This continuity of existence, this successive series of dreams, so different from the broken incoherence of other men's sleep, at times bewilders me with strange and suspicious thoughts. What if this glorious sleep be a real life, and this dull waking the true repose? Why not? What is there more faithful in the one than in the other? And there have I garnered and collected all of pleasure that I am capable of feeling. I seek no joy in this world; I form no ties, I feast not, nor love, nor make merry; I am only impatient till the hour when I may

re-enter my royal realms and pour my renewed delight into the bosom of my bright Ideal. There then have I found all that the world denied me; there have I realized the yearning and the aspiration within me; there have I coined the untold poetry into the Felt, the Seen!"

I found, continued Trevelyman, that this tale was corroborated by inquiry into the visionary's habits. He shunned society; avoided all unnecessary movement or excitement. He fared with rigid abstemiousness, and only appeared to feel pleasure as the day departed, and the hour of return to his imaginary kingdom approached. He always retired to rest punctually at a certain hour, and would sleep so soundly that a cannon fired under his window would not arouse him. He never, which may seem singular, spoke or moved much in his sleep, but was peculiarly calm, almost to the appearance of lifelessness; but, discovering once that he had been watched in sleep, he was wont afterwards carefully to secure the chamber from intrusion. His victory over the natural incoherence of sleep had, when I first knew him, lasted for some years; possibly what imagination first produced was afterwards continued by habit.

I saw him again a few months subsequent to this confession, and he seemed to me much changed. His health was broken, and his abstraction had deepened into gloom.

I questioned him of the cause of the alteration, and he answered me with great reluctance,—

"She is dead," said he; "my realms are desolate! A serpent stung her, and she died in these very arms. Vainly, when I started from my sleep in horror and despair, vainly did I say to myself,—This is but a dream. I shall see her again. A vision cannot die! Hath it flesh that decays; is it not a spirit,—bodiless, indissoluble? With what terrible anxiety I awaited the night! Again I slept, and the DREAM lay again before me, dead and withered. Even the ideal can vanish. I assisted in the burial; I laid her in the earth; I heaped the monumental mockery over her form. And never since hath she, or aught like her, revisited my dreams. I see her only when I wake; thus to wake is indeed to dream!

But," continued the visionary in a solemn voice, "I feel myself departing from this world, and with a fearful joy; for I think there may be a land beyond even the land of sleep where I shall see her again,—a land in which a vision itself may be restored."

And in truth, concluded Trevlyan, the dreamer died shortly afterwards, suddenly, and in his sleep. And never before, perhaps, had Fate so literally made of a living man (with his passions and his powers, his ambition and his love) the plaything and puppet of a dream!

"Ah," said Vane, who had heard the latter part of Trevlyan's story, "could the German have bequeathed to us his secret, what a refuge should we possess from the ills of earth! The dungeon and disease, poverty, affliction, shame, would cease to be the tyrants of our lot; and to Sleep we should confine our history and transfer our emotions."

"Gertrude," whispered the lover, "what his kingdom and his bride were to the Dreamer art thou to me!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BROTHERS.

THE banks of the Rhine now shelved away into sweeping plains, and on their right rose the once imperial city of Boppard. In no journey of similar length do you meet with such striking instances of the mutability and shifts of power. To find, as in the Memphian Egypt, a city sunk into a heap of desolate ruins; the hum, the roar, the mart of nations, hushed into the silence of ancestral tombs, is less humbling to our human vanity than to mark, as along the Rhine, the kingly city dwindled into the humble town or the dreary village,—decay without its grandeur, change without the awe of its solitude! On the site on which Drusus raised his Roman tower, and the kings of the Franks their palaces, trade now dribbles

in tobacco-pipes, and transforms into an excellent cotton factory the antique nunnery of Königsberg! So be it; it is the progressive order of things,—the world itself will soon be one excellent cotton factory!

"Look," said Trevelyman, as they sailed on, "at yonder mountain, with its two traditionary Castles of Liebenstein and Sternfels."

Massive and huge the ruins swelled above the green rock, at the foot of which lay, in happier security from time and change, the clustered cottages of the peasant, with a single spire rising above the quiet village.

"Is there not, Albert, a celebrated legend attached to those castles?" said Gertrude. "I think I remember to have heard their names in connection with your profession of tale-teller."

"Yes," said Trevelyman, "the story relates to the last lords of those shattered towers, and —"

"You will sit here, nearer to me, and begin," interrupted Gertrude, in her tone of childlike command. "Come."

THE BROTHERS.

A TALE.¹

You must imagine then, dear Gertrude (said Trevelyman), a beautiful summer day, and by the same faculty that none possess so richly as yourself, for it is you who can kindle something of that divine spark even in me, you must rebuild those shattered towers in the pomp of old; raise the gallery and the hall; man the battlements with warders, and give the proud banners of ancestral chivalry to wave upon the walls. But above, sloping half down the rock, you must fancy the hanging gardens of Liebenstein, fragrant with flowers, and basking in the noonday sun.

On the greenest turf, underneath an oak, there sat three persons, in the bloom of youth. Two of the three were brothers; the third was an orphan girl, whom the lord of the opposite tower of Sternfels had bequeathed to the protection

¹ This tale is, in reality, founded on the beautiful tradition which belongs to Liebenstein and Sternfels.

of his brother, the chief of Liebenstein. The castle itself and the demesne that belonged to it passed away from the female line, and became the heritage of Otho, the orphan's cousin, and the younger of the two brothers now seated on the turf.

"And oh," said the elder, whose name was Warbeck, "you have twined a chaplet for my brother; have you not, dearest Leoline, a simple flower for me?"

The beautiful orphan (for beautiful she was, Gertrude, as the heroine of the tale you bid me tell ought to be,—should she not have to the dreams of my fancy your lustrous hair, and your sweet smile, and your eyes of blue, that are never, never silent? Ah, pardon me, that in a former tale, I denied the heroine the beauty of your face, and remember that to atone for it, I endowed her with the beauty of your mind) — the beautiful orphan blushed to her temples, and culling from the flowers in her lap the freshest of the roses, began weaving them into a wreath for Warbeck.

"It would be better," said the gay Otho, "to make my sober brother a chaplet of the rue and cypress; the rose is much too bright a flower for so serious a knight."

Leoline held up her hand reprovingly.

"Let him laugh, dearest cousin," said Warbeck, gazing passionately on her changing cheek; "and thou, Leoline, believe that the silent stream runs the deepest."

At this moment, they heard the voice of the old chief, their father, calling aloud for Leoline; for ever when he returned from the chase he wanted her gentle presence; and the hall was solitary to him if the light sound of her step and the music of her voice were not heard in welcome.

Leoline hastened to her guardian, and the brothers were left alone.

Nothing could be more dissimilar than the features and the respective characters of Otho and Warbeck. Otho's countenance was flushed with the brown hues of health; his eyes were of the brightest hazel: his dark hair wreathed in short curls round his open and fearless brow; the jest ever echoed on his lips, and his step was bounding as the foot of the hunter of the Alps. Bold and light was his spirit; if at times

he betrayed the haughty insolence of youth, he felt generously, and though not ever ready to confess sorrow for a fault, he was at least ready to brave peril for a friend.

But Warbeck's frame, though of equal strength, was more slender in its proportions than that of his brother; the fair long hair that characterized his northern race hung on either side of a countenance calm and pale, and deeply impressed with thought, even to sadness. His features, more majestic and regular than Otho's, rarely varied in their expression. More resolute even than Otho, he was less impetuous; more impassioned, he was also less capricious.

The brothers remained silent after Leoline had left them. Otho carelessly braced on his sword, that he had laid aside on the grass; but Warbeck gathered up the flowers that had been touched by the soft hand of Leoline, and placed them in his bosom.

The action disturbed Otho; he bit his lip, and changed colour; at length he said, with a forced laugh,—

"It must be confessed, brother, that you carry your affection for our fair cousin to a degree that even relationship seems scarcely to warrant."

"It is true," said Warbeck, calmly; "I love her with a love surpassing that of blood."

"How!" said Otho, fiercely: "do you dare to think of Leoline as a bride?"

"Dare!" repeated Warbeck, turning yet paler than his wonted hue.

"Yes, I have said the word! Know, Warbeck, that I, too, love Leoline; I, too, claim her as my bride; and never, while I can wield a sword, never, while I wear the spurs of knight-hood, will I render my claim to a living rival,—even," he added, sinking his voice, "though that rival be my brother!"

Warbeck answered not; his very soul seemed stunned; he gazed long and wistfully on his brother, and then, turning his face away, ascended the rock without uttering a single word.

This silence startled Otho. Accustomed to vent every emotion of his own, he could not comprehend the forbearance of his brother; he knew his high and brave nature too well to

imagine that it arose from fear. Might it not be contempt, or might he not, at this moment, intend to seek their father; and, the first to proclaim his love for the orphan, advance, also, the privilege of the elder born? As these suspicions flashed across him, the haughty Otho strode to his brother's side, and laying his hand on his arm, said,—

"Whither goest thou; and dost thou consent to surrender Leoline?"

"Does she love thee, Otho?" answered Warbeck, breaking silence at last; and his voice spoke so deep an anguish, that it arrested the passions of Otho even at their height.

"It is thou who art now silent," continued Warbeck; "speak. Doth she love thee, and has her lip confessed it?"

"I have believed that she loved me," faltered Otho; "but she is of maiden bearing, and her lip, at least, has never told it."

"Enough," said Warbeck; "release your hold."

"Stay," said Otho, his suspicions returning; "stay,—yet one word; dost thou seek my father? He ever honoured thee more than me: wilt thou own to him thy love, and insist on thy right of birth? By my soul and my hope of heaven, do it, and one of us two must fall!"

"Poor boy!" answered Warbeck, bitterly; "how little thou canst read the heart of one who loves truly! Thinkest thou I would wed her if she loved thee? Thinkest thou I could, even to be blessed myself, give her one moment's pain? Out on the thought! away!"

"Then wilt not thou seek our father?" said Otho, abashed.

"Our father! — has our father the keeping of Leoline's affection?" answered Warbeck; and shaking off his brother's grasp, he sought the way to the castle.

As he entered the hall, he heard the voice of Leoline; she was singing to the old chief one of the simple ballads of the time that the warrior and the hunter loved to hear. He paused lest he should break the spell (a spell stronger than a sorcerer's to him), and gazing upon Leoline's beautiful form, his heart sank within him. His brother and himself had each that day, as they sat in the gardens, given her a flower;

his flower was the fresher and the rarer; his he saw not, but she wore his brother's in her bosom!

The chief, lulled by the music and wearied with the toils of the chase, sank into sleep as the song ended, and Warbeck, coming forward, motioned to Leoline to follow him. He passed into a retired and solitary walk, and when they were a little distance from the castle, Warbeck turned round, and taking Leoline's hand gently, said,—

"Let us rest here for one moment, dearest cousin; I have much on my heart to say to thee."

"And what is there," answered Leoline, as they sat on a mossy bank, with the broad Rhine glancing below, "what is there that my kind Warbeck would ask of me? Ah, would it might be some favour, something in poor Leoline's power to grant; for ever from my birth you have been to me most tender, most kind. You, I have often heard them say, taught my first steps to walk; you formed my infant lips into language, and, in after years, when my wild cousin was far away in the forests at the chase, you would brave his gay jest and remain at home, lest Leoline should be weary in the solitude. Ah, would I could repay you!"

Warbeck turned away his cheek; his heart was very full, and it was some moments before he summoned courage to reply.

"My fair cousin," said he, "those were happy days; but they were the days of childhood. New cares and new thoughts have now come on us; but I am still thy friend, Leoline, and still thou wilt confide in me thy young sorrows and thy young hopes, as thou ever didst. Wilt thou not, Leoline?"

"Canst thou ask me?" said Leoline; and Warbeck, gazing on her face, saw that though her eyes were full of tears, they yet looked steadily upon his; and he knew that she loved him only as a sister.

He sighed, and paused again ere he resumed. "Enough," said he; "now to my task. Once on a time, dear cousin, there lived among these mountains a certain chief who had two sons, and an orphan like thyself dwelt also in his halls. And the elder son — but no matter, let us not waste words on

him! — the younger son, then, loved the orphan dearly, — more dearly than cousins love; and fearful of refusal, he prayed the elder one to urge his suit to the orphan. Leoline, my tale is done. Canst thou not love Otho as he loves thee?"

And now lifting his eyes to Leoline, he saw that she trembled violently, and her cheek was covered with blushes.

"Say," continued he, mastering himself, "is not that flower — his present — a token that he is chiefly in thy thoughts?"

"Ah, Warbeck! do not deem me ungrateful that I wear not yours also; but —"

"Hush!" said Warbeck, hastily; "I am but as thy brother; is not Otho more? He is young, brave, and beautiful. God grant that he may deserve thee, if thou givest him so rich a gift as thy affections!"

"I saw less of Otho in my childhood," said Leoline, evasively; "therefore, his kindness of late years seemed stranger to me than thine."

"And thou wilt not then reject him? Thou wilt be his bride?"

"And *thy* sister," answered Leoline.

"Bless thee, mine own dear cousin! one brother's kiss then, and farewell! Otho shall thank thee for himself."

He kissed her forehead calmly, and, turning away, plunged into the thicket; then, nor till then, he gave vent to such emotions as, had Leoline seen them, Otho's suit had been lost forever; for passionately, deeply as in her fond and innocent heart she loved Otho, the *happiness* of Warbeck was not less dear to her.

When the young knight had recovered his self-possession he went in search of Otho. He found him alone in the wood, leaning with folded arms against a tree, and gazing moodily on the ground. Warbeck's noble heart was touched at his brother's dejection.

"Cheer thee, Otho," said he; "I bring thee no bad tidings; I have seen Leoline, I have conversed with her — nay, start not, — she loves thee! she is thine!"

"Generous, generous Warbeck!" exclaimed Otho; and he

threw himself on his brother's neck. "No, no," said he, "this must not be; thou hast the elder claim,—I resign her to thee. Forgive me my waywardness, brother, forgive me!"

"Think of the past no more," said Warbeck; "the love of Leoline is an excuse for greater offences than thine. And now, be kind to her; her nature is soft and keen. I know her well; for I have studied her faintest wish. Thou art hasty and quick of ire; but remember that a word wounds where love is deep. For my sake, as for hers, think more of her happiness than thine own; now seek her,—she waits to hear from thy lips the tale that sounded cold upon mine."

With that he left his brother, and, once more re-entering the castle, he went into the hall of his ancestors. His father still slept; he put his hand on his gray hair, and blessed him; then stealing up to his chamber, he braced on his helm and armour, and thrice kissing the hilt of his sword, said, with a flushed cheek,—

"Henceforth be *thou* my bride!" Then passing from the castle, he sped by the most solitary paths down the rock, gained the Rhine, and hailing one of the numerous fishermen of the river, won the opposite shore; and alone, but not sad, for his high heart supported him, and Leoline at least was happy, he hastened to Frankfort.

The town was all gayety and life, arms clanged at every corner, the sounds of martial music, the wave of banners, the glittering of plumed casques, the neighing of war-steeds, all united to stir the blood and inflame the sense. Saint Bertrand had lifted the sacred cross along the shores of the Rhine, and the streets of Frankfort witnessed with what success!

On that same day Warbeck assumed the sacred badge, and was enlisted among the knights of the Emperor Conrad.

We must suppose some time to have elapsed, and Otho and Leoline were not yet wedded; for, in the first fervour of his gratitude to his brother, Otho had proclaimed to his father and to Leoline the conquest Warbeck had obtained over himself; and Leoline, touched to the heart, would not consent that the wedding should take place immediately. "Let him, at least," said she, "not be insulted by a premature festivity;

and give him time, amongst the lofty beauties he will gaze upon in a far country, to forget, Otho, that he once loved her who is the beloved of thee."

The old chief applauded this delicacy; and even Otho, in the first flush of his feelings towards his brother, did not venture to oppose it. They settled, then, that the marriage should take place at the end of a year.

Months rolled away, and an absent and moody gloom settled upon Otho's brow. In his excursions with his gay companions among the neighbouring towns, he heard of nothing but the glory of the Crusaders, of the homage paid to the heroes of the Cross at the courts they visited, of the adventures of their life, and the exciting spirit that animated their war. In fact, neither minstrel nor priest suffered the theme to grow cold; and the fame of those who had gone forth to the holy strife gave at once emulation and discontent to the youths who remained behind.

"And my brother enjoys this ardent and glorious life," said the impatient Otho; "while I, whose arm is as strong, and whose heart is as bold, languish here listening to the dull tales of a hoary sire and the silly songs of an orphan girl." His heart smote him at the last sentence, but he had already begun to weary of the gentle love of Leoline. Perhaps when he had no longer to gain a triumph over a rival the excitement palled; or perhaps his proud spirit secretly chafed at being conquered by his brother in generosity, even when outshining him in the success of love.

But poor Leoline, once taught that she was to consider Otho her betrothed, surrendered her heart entirely to his control. His wild spirit, his dark beauty, his daring valour, won while they awed her; and in the fitfulness of his nature were those perpetual springs of hope and fear that are the fountains of ever-agitated love. She saw with increasing grief the change that was growing over Otho's mind; nor did she divine the cause. "Surely I have not offended him?" thought she.

Among the companions of Otho was one who possessed a singular sway over him. He was a knight of that mysterious

Order of the Temple, which exercised at one time so great a command over the minds of men.

A severe and dangerous wound in a brawl with an English knight had confined the Templar at Frankfort, and prevented his joining the Crusade. During his slow recovery he had formed an intimacy with Otho, and, taking up his residence at the castle of Liebenstein, had been struck with the beauty of Leoline. Prevented by his oath from marriage, he allowed himself a double license in love, and doubted not, could he disengage the young knight from his betrothed, that she would add a new conquest to the many he had already achieved. Artfully therefore he painted to Otho the various attractions of the Holy Cause; and, above all, he failed not to describe, with glowing colours, the beauties who, in the gorgeous East, distinguished with a prodigal favour the warriors of the Cross. Dowries, unknown in the more sterile mountains of the Rhine, accompanied the hand of these beauteous maidens; and even a prince's daughter was not deemed, he said, too lofty a marriage for the heroes who might win kingdoms for themselves.

"To me," said the Templar, "such hopes are eternally denied. But you, were you not already betrothed, what fortunes might await you!"

By such discourses the ambition of Otho was perpetually aroused; they served to deepen his discontent at his present obscurity, and to convert to distaste the only solace it afforded in the innocence and affection of Leoline.

One night, a minstrel sought shelter from the storm in the halls of Liebenstein. His visit was welcomed by the chief, and he repaid the hospitality he had received by the exercise of his art. He sang of the chase, and the gaunt hound started from the hearth. He sang of love, and Otho, forgetting his restless dreams, approached to Leoline, and laid himself at her feet. Louder then and louder rose the strain. The minstrel sang of war; he painted the feats of the Crusaders; he plunged into the thickest of the battle; the steed neighed; the trump sounded; and you might have heard the ringing of the steel. But when he came to signalize the names of the boldest knights, high among the loftiest sounded the name of

Sir Warbeck of Liebenstein. Thrice had he saved the imperial banner; two chargers slain beneath him, he had covered their bodies with the fiercest of the foe.

Gentle in the tent and terrible in the fray, the minstrel should forget his craft ere the Rhine should forget its hero. The chief started from his seat. Leoline clasped the minstrel's hand.

"Speak,—you have seen him, he lives, he is honoured?"

"I myself am but just from Palestine, brave chief and noble maiden. I saw the gallant knight of Liebenstein at the right hand of the imperial Conrad. And he, ladye, was the only knight whom admiration shone upon without envy, its shadow. Who then," continued the minstrel, once more striking his harp, "who then would remain inglorious in the hall? Shall not the banners of his sires reproach him as they wave; and shall not every voice from Palestine strike shame into his soul?"

"Right!" cried Otho, suddenly, and flinging himself at the feet of his father. "Thou hearest what my brother has done, and thine aged eyes weep tears of joy. Shall I only dishonour thine old age with a rusted sword? No! grant me, like my brother, to go forth with the heroes of the Cross!"

"Noble youth," cried the harper, "therein speaks the soul of Sir Warbeck; hear him, sir knight,—hear the noble youth."

"Heaven cries aloud in his voice," said the Templar, solemnly.

"My son, I cannot chide thine ardour," said the old chief, raising him with trembling hands; "but Leoline, thy betrothed?"

Pale as a statue, with ears that doubted their sense as they drank in the cruel words of her lover, stood the orphan. She did not speak, she scarcely breathed; she sank into her seat, and gazed upon the ground, till, at the speech of the chief both maiden pride and maiden tenderness restored her consciousness, and she said,—

"I, uncle! Shall I bid Otho stay when his wishes bid him depart?"

"He will return to thee, noble ladye, covered with glory," said the harper: but Otho said no more. The touching voice of Leoline went to his soul; he resumed his seat in silence; and Leoline, going up to him, whispered gently, "Act as though I were not;" and left the hall to commune with her heart and to weep alone.

"I can wed her before I go," said Otho, suddenly, as he sat that night in the Templar's chamber.

"Why, that is true! and leave thy bride in the first week, — a hard trial!"

"Better than incur the chance of never calling her mine. Dear, kind, beloved Leoline!"

"Assuredly, she deserves all from thee; and, indeed, it is no small sacrifice, at thy years and with thy mien, to renounce forever all interest among the noble maidens thou wilt visit. Ah, from the galleries of Constantinople what eyes will look down on thee, and what ears, learning that thou art Otho the bridegroom, will turn away, caring for thee no more! A bridegroom without a bride! Nay, man, much as the Cross wants warriors, I am enough thy friend to tell thee, if thou weddest, to stay peaceably at home, and forget in the chase the labours of war, from which thou wouldst strip the ambition of love."

"I would I knew what were best," said Otho, irresolutely. "My brother — ha, shall he forever excel me? But Leoline, how will she grieve, — she who left him for me!"

"Was that thy fault?" said the Templar, gayly. "It may many times chance to thee again to be preferred to another. Troth, it is a sin under which the conscience may walk lightly enough. But sleep on it, Otho; my eyes grow heavy."

The next day Otho sought Leoline, and proposed to her that their wedding should precede his parting; but so embarrassed was he, so divided between two wishes, that Leoline, offended, hurt, stung by his coldness, refused the proposal at once. She left him lest he should see her weep, and then — then she repented even of her just pride!

But Otho, striving to appease his conscience with the belief

that hers now was the *sole* fault, busied himself in preparations for his departure. Anxious to outshine his brother, he departed not as Warbeck, alone and unattended, but levying all the horse, men, and money that his domain of Sternfels — which he had not yet tenanted — would afford, he repaired to Frankfort at the head of a glittering troop.

The Templar, affecting a relapse, tarried behind, and promised to join him at that Constantinople of which he had so loudly boasted. Meanwhile he devoted his whole powers of pleasing to console the unhappy orphan. The force of her simple love was, however, stronger than all his arts. In vain he insinuated doubts of Otho, — she refused to hear them; in vain he poured with the softest accents into her ear the witchery of flattery and song, — she turned heedlessly away; and only pained by the courtesies that had so little resemblance to Otho, she shut herself up in her chamber, and pined in solitude for her forsaker.

The Templar now resolved to attempt darker arts to obtain power over her, when, fortunately, he was summoned suddenly away by a mission from the Grand Master of so high import, that it could not be resisted by a passion stronger in his breast than love, — the passion of ambition. He left the castle to its solitude; and Otho peopling it no more with his gay companions, no solitude *could* be more unfrequently disturbed.

Meanwhile, though, ever and anon, the fame of Warbeck reached their ears, it came unaccompanied with that of Otho, — of him they had no tidings; and thus the love of the tender orphan was kept alive by the perpetual restlessness of fear. At length the old chief died, and Leoline was left utterly alone.

One evening as she sat with her maidens in the hall, the ringing of a steed's hoofs was heard in the outer court; a horn sounded, the heavy gates were unbarred, and a knight of a stately mien and covered with the mantle of the Cross entered the hall. He stopped for one moment at the entrance, as if overpowered by his emotion; in the next he had clasped Leoline to his breast.

"Dost thou not recognize thy cousin Warbeck?" He doffed

his casque, and she saw that majestic brow which, unlike Otho's, had never changed or been clouded in its aspect to her.

"The war is suspended for the present," said he. "I learned my father's death, and I have returned home to hang up my banner in the hall and spend my days in peace."

Time and the life of camps had worked their change upon Warbeck's face; the fair hair, deepened in its shade, was worn from the temples, and disclosed one scar that rather aided the beauty of a countenance that had always something high and martial in its character; but the calm it had once worn had settled down into sadness; he conversed more rarely than before, and though he smiled not less often, nor less kindly, the smile had more of thought, and the kindness had forgot its passion. He had apparently conquered a love that was so early crossed, but not that fidelity of remembrance which made Leoline dearer to him than all others, and forbade him to replace the images he had graven upon his soul.

The orphan's lips trembled with the name of Otho, but a certain recollection stifled even her anxiety. Warbeck hastened to forestall her questions. Otho was well, he said, and sojourning at Constantinople; he had lingered there so long that the crusade had terminated without his aid: doubtless now he would speedily return,—a month, a week, nay, a day, might restore him to her side.

Leoline was inexpressibly consoled, yet something remained untold. Why, so eager for the strife of the sacred tomb, had he thus tarried at Constantinople? She wondered, she wearied conjecture, but she did not dare to search further.

The generous Warbeck concealed from her that Otho led a life of the most reckless and indolent dissipation,—wasting his wealth in the pleasures of the Greek court, and only occupying his ambition with the wild schemes of founding a principality in those foreign climes, which the enterprises of the Norman adventurers had rendered so alluring to the knightly bandits of the age.

The cousins resumed their old friendship, and Warbeck believed that it was friendship alone.

They walked again among the gardens in which their childhood had strayed; they sat again on the green turf whereon they had woven flowers; they looked down on the eternal mirror of the Rhine,—ah! could it have reflected the same unawakened freshness of their life's early spring!

The grave and contemplative mind of Warbeck had not been so contented with the honours of war but that it had sought also those calmer sources of emotion which were yet found among the sages of the East. He had drunk at the fountain of the wisdom of those distant climes, and had acquired the habits of meditation which were indulged by those wiser tribes from which the Crusaders brought back to the North the knowledge that was destined to enlighten their posterity. Warbeck, therefore, had little in common with the ruder chiefs around; he did not summon them to his board, nor attend at their noisy wassails. Often late at night, in yon shattered tower, his lonely lamp shone still over the mighty stream, and his only relief to loneliness was in the presence and the song of his soft cousin.

Months rolled on, when suddenly a vague and fearful rumour reached the castle of Liebenstein. Otho was returning home to the neighbouring tower of Sternfels; but not alone. He brought back with him a Greek bride of surprising beauty, and dowered with almost regal wealth. Leoline was the first to discredit the rumour; Leoline was soon the only one who disbelieved.

Bright in the summer noon flashed the array of horsemen; far up the steep ascent wound the gorgeous cavalcade; the lonely towers of Liebenstein heard the echo of many a laugh and peal of merriment. Otho bore home his bride to the hall of Sternfels.

That night there was a great banquet in Otho's castle; the lights shone from every casement, and music swelled loud and ceaselessly within.

By the side of Otho, glittering with the prodigal jewels of the East, sat the Greek. Her dark locks, her flashing eye, the false colours of her complexion, dazzled the eyes of her guests. On her left hand sat the Templar.

"By the holy rood," quoth the Templar, gayly, though he crossed himself as he spoke, "we shall scare the owls to-night on those grim towers of Liebenstein. Thy grave brother, Sir Otho, will have much to do to comfort his cousin when she sees what a gallant life she would have led with thee."

"Poor damsel!" said the Greek, with affected pity, "doubtless she will now be reconciled to the rejected one. I hear he is a knight of a comely mien."

"Peace!" said Otho, sternly, and quaffing a large goblet of wine.

The Greek bit her lip, and glanced meaningly at the Templar, who returned the glance.

"Nought but a beauty such as thine can win my pardon," said Otho, turning to his bride, and gazing passionately in her face.

The Greek smiled.

Well sped the feast, the laugh deepened, the wine circled, when Otho's eye rested on a guest at the bottom of the board, whose figure was mantled from head to foot, and whose face was covered by a dark veil.

"Beshrew me!" said he, aloud, "but this is scarce courteous at our revel: will the stranger vouchsafe to unmask?"

These words turned all eyes to the figure, and they who sat next it perceived that it trembled violently; at length it rose, and walking slowly, but with grace, to the fair Greek, it laid beside her a wreath of flowers.

"It is a simple gift, ladye," said the stranger, in a voice of such sweetness that the rudest guest was touched by it; "but it is all I can offer, and the bride of Otho should not be without a gift at my hands. May ye both be happy!"

With these words, the stranger turned and passed from the hall silent as a shadow.

"Bring back the stranger!" cried the Greek, recovering her surprise. Twenty guests sprang up to obey her mandate.

"No, no!" said Otho, waving his hand impatiently. "Touch her not, heed her not, at your peril."

The Greek bent over the flowers to conceal her anger, and from amongst them dropped the broken half of a ring. Otho

recognized it at once; it was the broken half of that ring which he had broken with his betrothed. Alas! he required not such a sign to convince him that that figure, so full of ineffable grace, that touching voice, that simple action so tender in its sentiment, that gift, that blessing, came only from the forsaken and forgiving Leoline.

But Warbeck, alone in his solitary tower, paced to and fro with agitated steps. Deep, undying wrath at his brother's falsehood mingled with one burning, one delicious hope. He confessed now that he had deceived himself when he thought his passion was no more; was there any longer a bar to his union with Leoline?

In that delicacy which was breathed into him by his love, he had forbore to seek, or to offer her the insult of consolation. He felt that the shock should be borne alone, and yet he pined, he thirsted, to throw himself at her feet.

Nursing these contending thoughts, he was aroused by a knock at his door; he opened it. The passage was thronged by Leoline's maidens, pale, anxious, weeping. Leoline had left the castle, with but one female attendant, none knew whither; they knew too soon. From the hall of Sternfels she had passed over in the dark and inclement night to the valley in which the convent of Bornhofen offered to the weary of spirit and the broken of heart a refuge at the shrine of God.

At daybreak the next morning, Warbeck was at the convent's gate. He saw Leoline. What a change one night of suffering had made in that face, which was the fountain of all loveliness to him! He clasped her in his arms; he wept; he urged all that love could urge: he besought her to accept that heart which had never wronged her memory by a thought. "Oh, Leoline! didst thou not say once that these arms nursed thy childhood; that this voice soothed thine early sorrows? Ah, trust to them again and forever. From a love that forsook thee turn to the love that never swerved."

"No," said Leoline; "no. What would the chivalry of which thou art the boast,— what would they say of thee, wert thou to wed one affianced and deserted, who tarried years for another, and brought to thine arms only that heart which he

had abandoned? No; and even if thou, as I know thou wouldst be, wert callous to such wrong of thy high name, shall I bring to thee a broken heart and bruised spirit? Shalt thou wed sorrow and not joy; and shall sighs that will not cease, and tears that may not be dried, be the only dowry of thy bride? Thou, too, for whom all blessings should be ordained! No, forget me; forget thy poor Leoline! She hath nothing but prayers for thee."

In vain Warbeck pleaded; in vain he urged all that passion and truth could urge; the springs of earthly love were forever dried up in the orphan's heart, and her resolution was immovable. She tore herself from his arms, and the gate of the convent creaked harshly on his ear.

A new and stern emotion now wholly possessed him; though naturally mild and gentle, he cherished anger, when once it was aroused, with the strength of a calm mind. Leoline's tears, her sufferings, her wrongs, her uncomplaining spirit, the change already stamped upon her face,—all cried aloud to him for vengeance. "She is an orphan," said he, bitterly; "she hath none to protect, to redress her, save me alone. My father's charge over her forlorn youth descends of right to me. What matters it whether her forsaker be my brother? He is *her* foe. Hath he not crushed her heart? Hath he not consigned her to sorrow till the grave? And with what insult! no warning, no excuse; with lewd wassailers keeping revel for his new bridals in the hearing—before the sight—of his betrothed! Enough! the time hath come when, to use his own words, 'One of us two must fall!'" He half drew his sword as he spoke, and thrusting it back violently into the sheath, strode home to his solitary castle. The sound of steeds and of the hunting horn met him at his portal; the bridal train of Sternfels, all mirth and gladness, were parting for the chase.

That evening a knight in complete armour entered the banquet-hall of Sternfels, and defied Otho, on the part of Warbeck of Liebenstein, to mortal combat.

Even the Templar was startled by so unnatural a challenge; but Otho, reddening, took up the gage, and the day and spot

were fixed. Discontented, wroth with himself, a savage gladness seized him; he longed to wreak his desperate feelings even on his brother. Nor had he ever in his jealous heart forgiven that brother his virtues and his renown.

At the appointed hour the brothers met as foes. Warbeck's vizor was up, and all the settled sternness of his soul was stamped upon his brow. But Otho, more willing to brave the arm than to face the front of his brother, kept his vizor down; the Templar stood by him with folded arms. It was a study in human passions to his mocking mind. Scarcely had the first trump sounded to this dread conflict, when a new actor entered on the scene. The rumour of so unprecedented an event had not failed to reach the convent of Bornhofen; and now, two by two, came the sisters of the holy shrine, and the armed men made way, as with trailing garments and veiled faces they swept along into the very lists. At that moment one from amongst them left her sisters with a slow majestic pace, and paused not till she stood right between the brother foes.

"Warbeck," she said in a hollow voice, that curdled up his dark spirit as it spoke, "is it thus thou wouldst prove thy love, and maintain thy trust over the fatherless orphan whom thy sire bequeathed to thy care? Shall I have murder on my soul?" At that question she paused, and those who heard it were struck dumb, and shuddered. "The murder of one man by the hand of his own brother! Away, Warbeck! *I command.*"

"Shall I forget thy wrongs, Leoline?" said Warbeck.

"Wrongs! they united me to God! they are forgiven, they are no more. Earth has deserted me, but Heaven hath taken me to its arms. Shall I murmur at the change? And thou, Otho" — here her voice faltered — "thou, does thy conscience smite thee not? Wouldst thou atone for robbing me of hope by barring against me the future? Wretch that I should be, could I dream of mercy, could I dream of comfort, if thy brother fell by thy sword in my cause? Otho, I have pardoned thee, and blessed thee and thine. Once, perhaps, thou didst love me; remember how I loved thee, — cast down thine arms."

Otho gazed at the veiled form before him. Where had the soft Leoline learned to command? He turned to his brother; he felt all that he had inflicted upon both; and casting his sword upon the ground, he knelt at the feet of Leoline, and kissed her garment with a devotion that votary never lavished on a holier saint.

The spell that lay over the warriors around was broken; there was one loud cry of congratulation and joy. "And thou, Warbeck?" said Leoline, turning to the spot where, still motionless and haughty, Warbeck stood.

"Have I ever rebelled against thy will?" said he, softly; and buried the point of his sword in the earth. "Yet, Leoline, yet," added he, looking at his kneeling brother, "yet art thou already better avenged than by this steel!"

"Thou art! thou art!" cried Otho, smiting his breast; and slowly, and scarce noting the crowd that fell back from his path, Warbeck left the lists.

Leoline said no more; her divine errand was fulfilled. She looked long and wistfully after the stately form of the knight of Liebenstein, and then, with a slight sigh, she turned to Otho, "This is the last time we shall meet on earth. Peace be with us all!"

She then, with the same majestic and collected bearing, passed on towards the sisterhood; and as, in the same solemn procession, they glided back towards the convent, there was not a man present—no, not even the hardened Templar—who would not, like Otho, have bent his knee to Leoline.

Once more Otho plunged into the wild revelry of the age; his castle was thronged with guests, and night after night the lighted halls shone down athwart the tranquil Rhine. The beauty of the Greek, the wealth of Otho, the fame of the Templar, attracted all the chivalry from far and near. Never had the banks of the Rhine known so hospitable a lord as the knight of Sternfels. Yet gloom seized him in the midst of gladness, and the revel was welcome only as the escape from remorse. The voice of scandal, however, soon began to mingle with that of envy at the pomp of Otho. The fair Greek, it was said, weary of her lord, lavished her smiles on others;

the young and the fair were always most acceptable at the castle; and, above all, her guilty love for the Templar scarcely affected disguise. Otho alone appeared unconscious of the rumour; and though he had begun to neglect his bride, he relaxed not in his intimacy with the Templar.

It was noon, and the Greek was sitting in her bower alone with her suspected lover; the rich perfumes of the East mingled with the fragrance of flowers, and various luxuries, unknown till then in those northern shores, gave a soft and effeminate character to the room.

"I tell thee," said the Greek, petulantly, "that he begins to suspect; that I have seen him watch thee, and mutter as he watched, and play with the hilt of his dagger. Better let us fly ere it is too late, for his vengeance would be terrible were it once roused against us. Ah, why did I ever forsake my own sweet land for these barbarous shores! There, love is not considered eternal, nor inconstancy a crime worthy death."

"Peace, pretty one!" said the Templar, carelessly; "thou knowest not the laws of our foolish chivalry. Thinkest thou I could fly from a knight's halls like a thief in the night? Why, verily, even the red cross would not cover such dishonour. If thou fearest that thy dull lord suspects, let us part. The emperor hath sent to me from Frankfort. Ere evening I might be on my way thither."

"And I left to brave the barbarian's revenge alone? Is this thy chivalry?"

"Nay, prate not so wildly," answered the Templar. "Surely, when the object of his suspicion is gone, thy woman's art and thy Greek wiles can easily allay the jealous fiend. Do I not know thee, Glycera? Why, thou wouldst fool all men — save a Templar."

"And thou, cruel, wouldst thou leave me?" said the Greek, weeping. "How shall I live without thee?"

The Templar laughed slightly. "Can such eyes ever weep without a comforter? But farewell; I must not be found with thee. To-morrow I depart for Frankfort; we shall meet again."

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As soon as the door closed on the Templar, the Greek rose, and pacing the room, said, "Selfish, selfish! how could I ever trust him? Yet I dare not brave Otho alone. Surely it was his step that disturbed us in our yesterday's interview? Nay, I will fly. I can never want a companion."

She clapped her hands; a young page appeared; she threw herself on her seat and wept bitterly.

The page approached, and love was mingled with his compassion.

"Why weepest thou, dearest lady?" said he. "Is there aught in which Conrad's services — services! — ah, thou hast read his heart — *his devotion* may avail?"

Otho had wandered out the whole day alone; his vassals had observed that his brow was more gloomy than its wont, for he usually concealed whatever might prey within. Some of the most confidential of his servitors he had conferred with, and the conference had deepened the shadow of his countenance. He returned at twilight; the Greek did not honour the repast with her presence. She was unwell, and not to be disturbed. The gay Templar was the life of the board.

"Thou carriest a sad brow to-day, Sir Otho," said he; "good faith, thou hast caught it from the air of Liebenstein."

"I have something troubles me," answered Otho, forcing a smile, "which I would fain impart to thy friendly bosom. The night is clear and the moon is up, let us forth alone into the garden."

The Templar rose, and he forgot not to gird on his sword as he followed the knight.

Otho led the way to one of the most distant terraces that overhung the Rhine.

"Sir Templar," said he, pausing, "answer me one question on thy knightly honour. Was it thy step that left my lady's bower yester-eve at vesper?"

Startled by so sudden a query, the wily Templar faltered in his reply.

The red blood mounted to Otho's brow. "Nay, lie not, sir knight; these eyes, thanks to God! have not witnessed, but these ears have heard from others of my dishonour."

As Otho spoke, the Templar's eye resting on the water perceived a boat rowing fast over the Rhine; the distance forbade him to see more than the outline of two figures within it. "She was right," thought he; "perhaps that boat already bears her from the danger."

Drawing himself up to the full height of his tall stature, the Templar replied haughtily,—

"Sir Otho of Sternfels, if thou hast deigned to question thy vassals, obtain from them only an answer. It is not to contradict such minions that the knights of the Temple pledge their word!"

"Enough," cried Otho, losing patience, and striking the Templar with his clenched hand. "Draw, traitor, draw!"

Alone in his lofty tower Warbeck watched the night deepen over the heavens, and communed mournfully with himself. "To what end," thought he, "have these strong affections, these capacities of love, this yearning after sympathy, been given me? Unloved and unknown I walk to my grave, and all the nobler mysteries of my heart are forever to be untold."

Thus musing, he heard not the challenge of the warder on the wall, or the unbarring of the gate below, or the tread of footsteps along the winding stair; the door was thrown suddenly open, and Otho stood before him. "Come," he said, in a low voice trembling with passion; "come, I will show thee that which shall glad thine heart. Twofold is Leoline avenged."

Warbeck looked in amazement on a brother he had not met since they stood in arms each against the other's life, and he now saw that the arm that Otho extended to him dripped with blood, trickling drop by drop upon the floor.

"Come," said Otho, "follow me; it is my last prayer. Come, for Leoline's sake, come."

At that name Warbeck hesitated no longer; he girded on his sword, and followed his brother down the stairs and through the castle gate. The porter scarcely believed his eyes when he saw the two brothers, so long divided, go forth at that hour alone, and seemingly in friendship.

Warbeck, arrived at that epoch in the feelings when noth-

ing stuns, followed with silent steps the rapid strides of his brother. The two castles, as you are aware, are scarce a stone's throw from each other. In a few minutes Otho paused at an open space in one of the terraces of Sternfels, on which the moon shone bright and steady. "Behold!" he said, in a ghastly voice, "behold!" and Warbeck saw on the sward the corpse of the Templar, bathed with the blood that even still poured fast and warm from his heart.

"Hark!" said Otho. "He it was who first made me waver in my vows to Leoline; he persuaded me to wed yon whited falsehood. Hark! he, who had thus wronged my real love, dishonoured me with my faithless bride, and thus — thus — thus" — as grinding his teeth, he spurned again and again the dead body of the Templar — "thus Leoline and myself are avenged!"

"And thy wife?" said Warbeck, pityingly.

"Fled, — fled with a hireling page. It is well! she was not worth the sword that was once belted on — by Leoline."

The tradition, dear Gertrude, proceeds to tell us that Otho, though often menaced by the rude justice of the day for the death of the Templar, defied and escaped the menace. On the very night of his revenge a long and delirious illness seized him; the generous Warbeck forgave, forgot all, save that he had been once consecrated by Leoline's love. He tended him through his sickness, and when he recovered, Otho was an altered man. He forswore the comrades he had once courted, the revels he had once led. The halls of Sternfels were desolate as those of Liebenstein. The only companion Otho sought was Warbeck, and Warbeck bore with him. They had no topic in common, for on one subject Warbeck at least felt too deeply ever to trust himself to speak; yet did a strange and secret sympathy re-unite them. They had at least a common sorrow; often they were seen wandering together by the solitary banks of the river, or amidst the woods, without apparently interchanging word or sign. Otho died first, and still in the prime of youth; and Warbeck was now left companionless. In vain the imperial court wooed him to its pleasures;

in vain the camp proffered him the oblivion of renown. Ah! could he tear himself from a spot where morning and night he could see afar, amidst the valley, the roof that sheltered Leoline, and on which every copse, every turf, reminded him of former days? His solitary life, his midnight vigils, strange scrolls about his chamber, obtained him by degrees the repute of cultivating the darker arts; and shunning, he became shunned by all. But still it was sweet to hear from time to time of the increasing sanctity of her in whom he had treasured up his last thoughts of earth. She it was who healed the sick; she it was who relieved the poor; and the superstition of that age brought pilgrims from afar to the altars that she served.

Many years afterwards, a band of lawless robbers, who ever and anon broke from their mountain fastnesses to pillage and to desolate the valleys of the Rhine,—who spared neither sex nor age, neither tower nor hut, nor even the houses of God Himself,—laid waste the territories round Bornhofen, and demanded treasure from the convent. The abbess, of the bold lineage of Rudesheim, refused the sacrilegious demand. The convent was stormed; its vassals resisted; the robbers, inured to slaughter, won the day; already the gates were forced, when a knight, at the head of a small but hardy troop, rushed down from the mountain side and turned the tide of the fray. Wherever his sword flashed fell a foe; wherever his war-cry sounded was a space of dead men in the thick of the battle. The fight was won, the convent saved; the abbess and the sisterhood came forth to bless their deliverer. Laid under an aged oak, he was bleeding fast to death; his head was bare and his locks were gray, but scarcely yet with years. One only of the sisterhood recognized that majestic face; one bathed his parched lips; one held his dying hand; and in Leoline's presence passed away the faithful spirit of the last lord of Liebenstein!

"Oh!" said Gertrude, through her tears; "surely you must have altered the facts,—surely — surely — it must have been impossible for Leoline, with a woman's heart, to have loved Otho more than Warbeck?"

"My child," said Vane, "so think women when they *read* a tale of love, and see *the whole heart* bared before them; but not so act they in real life, when they see only the surface of character, and pierce not its depths — until it is too late!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. — A COMMON INCIDENT
NOT BEFORE DESCRIBED. — TREVYLYAN AND GERTRUDE.

THE day now grew cool as it waned to its decline, and the breeze came sharp upon the delicate frame of the sufferer. They resolved to proceed no farther; and as they carried with them attendants and baggage, which rendered their route almost independent of the ordinary accommodation, they steered for the opposite shore, and landed at a village beautifully sequestered in a valley, and where they fortunately obtained a lodging not often met with in the regions of the picturesque.

When Gertrude, at an early hour, retired to bed, Vane and Du——e fell into speculative conversation upon the nature of man. Vane's philosophy was of a quiet and passive scepticism; the physician dared more boldly, and rushed from doubt to negation. The attention of Trevylyan, as he sat apart and musing, was arrested in despite of himself. He listened to an argument in which he took no share, but which suddenly inspired him with an interest in that awful subject which, in the heat of youth and the occupations of the world, had never been so prominently called forth before.

"What," thought he, with unutterable anguish, as he listened to the earnest vehemence of the Frenchman and the tranquil assent of Vane, "if this creed were indeed true, — if there be no other world, — Gertrude is lost to me eternally, through the dread gloom of death there would break forth no star!"

That is a peculiar incident that perhaps occurs to us all at times, but which I have never found expressed in books,—namely, to hear a doubt of futurity at the very moment in which the present is most overcast; and to find at once this world stripped of its delusion and the next of its consolation. It is perhaps for others, rather than ourselves, that the fond heart requires a Hereafter. The tranquil rest, the shadow, and the silence, the mere pause of the wheel of life, have no terror for the wise, who know the due value of the world.

*"After the billows of a stormy sea,
Sweet is at last the haven of repose!"*

But not so when that stillness is to divide us eternally from others; when those we have loved with all the passion, the devotion, the watchful sanctity of the weak human heart, are to exist to us no more! when, after long years of desertion and widowhood on earth, there is to be no hope of reunion in that INVISIBLE beyond the stars; when the torch, not of life only, but of love, is to be quenched in the Dark Fountain, and the grave, that we would fain hope is the great restorer of broken ties, is but the dumb seal of hopeless, utter, inexorable separation! And it is this thought, this sentiment, which makes religion out of woe, and teaches belief to the mourning heart that in the gladness of united affections felt not the necessity of a heaven! To how many is the death of the beloved the parent of faith!

Stung by his thoughts, Trevelyman rose abruptly, and stealing from the lowly hostelry, walked forth amidst the serene and deepening night; from the window of Gertrude's room the light streamed calm on the purple air.

With uneven steps and many a pause, he paced to and fro beneath the window, and gave the rein to his thoughts. How intensely he felt the ALL that Gertrude was to him! how bitterly he foresaw the change in his lot and character that her death would work out! For who that met him in later years ever dreamed that emotions so soft, and yet so ardent, had visited one so stern? Who could have believed that time was when the polished and cold Trevelyman had kept the vigils he

now held below the chamber of one so little like himself as Gertrude, in that remote and solitary hamlet, shut in by the haunted mountains of the Rhine, and beneath the moonlight of the romantic North?

While thus engaged, the light in Gertrude's room was suddenly extinguished; it is impossible to express how much that trivial incident affected him! It was like an emblem of what was to come; the light had been the only evidence of life that broke upon that hour, and he was now left alone with the shades of night. Was not this like the herald of Gertrude's own death; the extinction of the only living ray that broke upon the darkness of the world?

His anguish, his presentiment of utter desolation, increased. He groaned aloud; he dashed his clenched hand to his breast; large and cold drops of agony stole down his brow. "Father," he exclaimed with a struggling voice, "let this cup pass from me! Smite my ambition to the root; curse me with poverty, shame, and bodily disease; but leave me this one solace, this one companion of my fate!"

At this moment Gertrude's window opened gently, and he heard accents steal soothingly upon his ear.

"Is not that your voice, Albert?" said she, softly. "I heard it just as I lay down to rest, and could not sleep while you were thus exposed to the damp night air. You do not answer; surely it is your voice: when did I mistake it for another's?"

Mastering with a violent effort his emotions, Trevylyan answered, with a sort of convulsive gayety,—

"Why come to these shores, dear Gertrude, unless you are honoured with the chivalry that belongs to them? What wind, what blight, can harm me while within the circle of your presence; and what sleep can bring me dreams so dear as the waking thought of you?"

"It is cold," said Gertrude, shivering; "come in, dear Albert, I beseech you, and I will thank you to-morrow." Gertrude's voice was choked by the hectic cough, that went like an arrow to Trevylyan's heart; and he felt that in her anxiety for him she was now exposing her own frame to the unwholesome night.

He spoke no more, but hurried within the house; and when the gray light of morn broke upon his gloomy features, haggard from the want of sleep, it might have seemed, in that dim eye and fast-sinking cheek, as if the lovers were not to be divided—even by death itself.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL LEARN HOW THE FAIRIES WERE RECEIVED BY THE SOVEREIGNS OF THE MINES. — THE COMPLAINT OF THE LAST OF THE FAUNS. — THE RED HUNSMAN. — THE STORM. — DEATH.

IN the deep valley of Ehrenthal, the metal kings — the Prince of the Silver Palaces, the Gnome Monarch of the dull Lead Mine, the President of the Copper United States — held a court to receive the fairy wanderers from the island of Nonnewërth.

The prince was there, in a gallant hunting-suit of oak leaves, in honour to England; and wore a profusion of fairy orders, which had been instituted from time to time, in honour of the human poets that had celebrated the spiritual and ethereal tribes. Chief of these, sweet Dreamer of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," was the badge crystallized from the dews that rose above the whispering reeds of Avon on the night of thy birth, — the great epoch of the intellectual world! Nor wert thou, O beloved Musæus! nor thou, dim-dreaming Tieck! nor were ye, the wild imaginer of the bright-haired Undine, and the wayward spirit that invoked for the gloomy Manfred the Witch of the breathless Alps and the spirits of earth and air! — nor were ye without the honours of fairy homage! Your memory may fade from the heart of man, and the spells of new enchanters may succeed to the charm you once wove over the face of the common world; but still in the green knolls of the haunted valley and the deep shade

of forests, and the starred palaces of air, ye are honoured by the beings of your dreams, as demigods and kings! Your graves are tended by invisible hands, and the places of your birth are hallowed by no perishable worship!

Even as I write,¹ far away amidst the hills of Scotland, and by the forest thou hast clothed with immortal verdure, thou, the maker of "the Harp by lone Glenfillan's spring," art passing from the earth which thou hast "painted with delight." And such are the chances of mortal fame, our children's children may raise new idols on the site of thy holy altar, and cavil where their sires adored; but for thee the mermaid of the ocean shall wail in her coral caves, and the sprite that lives in the waterfalls shall mourn! Strange shapes shall hew thy monument in the recesses of the lonely rocks! ever by moonlight shall the fairies pause from their roundel when some wild note of their minstrelsy reminds them of thine own,—ceasing from their revelries, to weep for the silence of that mighty lyre, which breathed alike a revelation of the mysteries of spirits and of men!

The King of the Silver Mines sat in a cavern in the valley, through which the moonlight pierced its way and slept in shadow on the soil shining with metals wrought into unnumbered shapes; and below him, on a humbler throne, with a gray beard and downcast eye, sat the aged King of the Dwarfs that preside over the dull realms of lead, and inspire the verse of —, and the prose of —! And there too a fantastic household elf was the President of the Copper Republic,—a spirit that loves economy and the Uses, and smiles sparsely on the Beautiful. But, in the centre of the cave, upon beds of the softest mosses, the untrodden growth of ages, reclined the fairy visitors, Nymphalin seated by her betrothed. And round the walls of the cave were dwarf attendants on the sovereigns of the metals, of a thousand odd shapes and fantastic garments. On the abrupt ledges of the rocks the bats, charmed to stillness but not sleep, clustered thickly, watching the scene with fixed and amazed eyes; and one old gray owl, the favour-

¹ It was just at the time the author was finishing this work that the great master of his art was drawing to the close of his career.

ite of the witch of the valley, sat blinking in a corner, listening with all her might that she might bring home the scandal to her mistress.

"And tell me, Prince of the Rhine-Island Fays," said the King of the Silver Mines, "for thou art a traveller, and a fairy that hath seen much, how go men's affairs in the upper world? As to ourself, we live here in a stupid splendour, and only hear the news of the day when our brother of lead pays a visit to the English printing-press, or the President of Copper goes to look at his improvements in steam-engines."

"Indeed," replied Fayzenheim, preparing to speak like Æneas in the Carthaginian court,— "indeed, your Majesty, I know not much that will interest you in the present aspect of mortal affairs, except that you are quite as much honoured at this day as when the Roman conqueror bent his knee to you among the mountains of Taunus; and a vast number of little round subjects of yours are constantly carried about by the rich, and pined after with hopeless adoration by the poor. But, begging your Majesty's pardon, may I ask what has become of your cousin, the King of the Golden Mines? I know very well that he has no dominion in these valleys, and do not therefore wonder at his absence from your court this night; but I see so little of his subjects on earth that I should fear his empire was well nigh at an end, if I did not recognize everywhere the most servile homage paid to a power now become almost invisible."

The King of the Silver Mines fetched a deep sigh. "Alas, prince," said he, "too well do you divine the expiration of my cousin's empire. So many of his subjects have from time to time gone forth to the world, pressed into military service and never returning, that his kingdom is nearly depopulated. And he lives far off in the distant parts of the earth, in a state of melancholy seclusion; the age of gold has passed, the age of paper has commenced."

"Paper," said Nymphalin, who was still somewhat of a *précieuse*,—"paper is a wonderful thing. What pretty books the human people write upon it!"

"Ah! that's what I design to convey," said the silver king.

"It is the age less of paper money than paper government: the Press is the true bank." The lord treasurer of the English fairies pricked up his ears at the word "bank;" for he was the Attwood of the fairies: he had a favourite plan of making money out of bulrushes, and had written four large bees'-wings full upon the true nature of capital.

While they were thus conversing, a sudden sound as of some rustic and rude music broke along the air, and closing its wild burden, they heard the following song:—

THE COMPLAINT OF THE LAST FAUN.

I.

The moon on the Latmos mountain
Her pining vigil keeps;
And ever the silver fountain
In the Dorian valley weeps.
But gone are Endymion's dreams;
And the crystal nymph
Bewails the nymph
Whose beauty sleeked the streams!

II.

Round Arcady's oak its green
The Bromian ivy weaves;
But no more is the satyr seen
Laughing out from the glossy leaves.
Hushed is the Lycian lute,
Still grows the seed
Of the Mœnale reed,
But the pipe of Pan is mute!

III.

The leaves in the noon-day quiver;
The vines on the mountains wave;
And Tiber rolls his river
As fresh by the Sylvan's cave.
But my brothers are dead and gone;
And far away
From their graves I stray,
And dream of the past alone!

IV.

And the sun of the north is chill;
And keen is the northern gale;
Alas for the song of the Argive hill;
And the dance in the Cretan vale!
The youth of the earth is o'er,
And its breast is rife
With the teeming life
Of the golden Tribes no more!

V.

My race are more blest than I,
Asleep in their distant bed;
'T were better, be sure, to die
Than to mourn for the buried Dead:
To rove by the stranger streams,
At dusk and dawn
A lonely faun,
The last of the Grecian's dreams.

As the song ended a shadow crossed the moonlight, that lay white and lustrous before the aperture of the cavern; and Nymphalin, looking up, beheld a graceful yet grotesque figure standing on the sward without, and gazing on the group in the cave. It was a shaggy form, with a goat's legs and ears; but the rest of its body, and the height of the stature, like a man's. An arch, pleasant, yet malicious smile played about its lips; and in its hand it held the pastoral pipe of which poets have sung,—they would find it difficult to sing to it!

"And who art thou?" said Fayzenheim, with the air of a hero.

"I am the last lingering wanderer of the race which the Romans worshipped; hither I followed their victorious steps, and in these green hollows have I remained. Sometimes in the still noon, when the leaves of spring bud upon the whispering woods, I peer forth from my rocky lair, and startle the peasant with my strange voice and stranger shape. Then goes he home, and puzzles his thick brain with mopes and fancies,

till at length he imagines me, the creature of the South! one of his northern demons, and his poets adapt the apparition to their barbarous lines."

"Ho!" quoth the silver king, "surely thou art the origin of the fabled Satan of the cowed men living whilom in yonder ruins, with its horns and goatish limbs; and the harmless faun has been made the figuration of the most implacable of fiends. But why, O wanderer of the South, lingerest thou in these foreign dells? Why returnest thou not to the bi-forked hill-top of old Parnassus, or the wastes around the yellow course of the Tiber?"

"My brethren are no more," said the poor faun; "and the very faith that left us sacred and unharmed is departed. But here all the spirits not of mortality are still honoured; and I wander, mourning for Silenus, though amidst the vines that should console me for his loss."

"Thou hast known great beings in thy day," said the leaden king, who loved the philosophy of a truism (and the history of whose inspirations I shall one day write).

"Ah, yes," said the faun; "my birth was amidst the freshness of the world, when the flush of the universal life coloured all things with divinity; when not a tree but had its Dryad, not a fountain that was without its Nymph. I sat by the gray throne of Saturn, in his old age, ere yet he was discrowned (for he was no visionary ideal, but the arch monarch of the pastoral age), and heard from his lips the history of the world's birth. But those times are gone forever,—they have left harsh successors."

"It is the age of paper," muttered the lord treasurer, shaking his head.

"What ho, for a dance!" cried Fayzenheim, too royal for moralities, and he whirled the beautiful Nymphalin into a waltz. Then forth issued the fairies, and out went the dwarfs. And the faun leaning against an aged elm, ere yet the midnight waned, the elves danced their charmed round to the antique minstrelsy of his pipe,—the minstrelsy of the Grecian world!

"Hast thou seen yet, my Nymphalin," said Fayzenheim, in

the pauses of the dance, "the recess of the Hartz, and the red form of its mighty hunter?"

"It is a fearful sight," answered Nymphalin; "but with thee I should not fear."

"Away then!" cried Fayzenheim; "let us away at the first cock-crow, into those shaggy dells; for there is no need of night to conceal us, and the unwitnessed blush of morn or the dreary silence of noon is, no less than the moon's reign, the season for the sports of the superhuman tribes."

Nymphalin, charmed with the proposal, readily assented; and at the last hour of night, bestriding the starbeams of the many-titled Friga, away sped the fairy cavalcade to the gloom of the mystic Hartz.

Fain would I relate the manner of their arrival in the thick recesses of the forest,—how they found the Red Hunter seated on a fallen pine beside a wide chasm in the earth, with the arching bows of the wizard oak wreathing above his head as a canopy, and his bow and spear lying idle at his feet. Fain would I tell of the reception which he deigned to the fairies, and how he told them of his ancient victories over man; how he chafed at the gathering invasions of his realm; and how joyously he gloated of some great convulsion¹ in the northern States, which, rapt into moody reveries in those solitary woods, the fierce demon broodingly foresaw. All these fain would I narrate, but they are not of the Rhine, and my story will not brook the delay. While thus conversing with the fiend, noon had crept on, and the sky had become overcast and lowering; the giant trees waved gustily to and fro, and the low gatherings of the thunder announced the approaching storm. Then the hunter rose and stretched his mighty limbs, and seizing his spear, he strode rapidly into the forest to meet the things of his own tribe that the tempest wakes from their rugged lair.

A sudden recollection broke upon Nymphalin. "Alas, alas!" she cried, wringing her hands; "what have I done! In journeying hither with thee, I have forgotten my office. I have neglected my watch over the elements, and my human

¹ Which has come to pass.—1847.

charge is at this hour, perhaps, exposed to all the fury of the storm."

"Cheer thee, my Nymphalin," said the prince, "we will lay the tempest;" and he waved his sword and muttered the charms which curb the winds and roll back the marching thunder: but for once the tempest ceased not at his spells. And now, as the fairies sped along the troubled air, a pale and beautiful form met them by the way, and the fairies paused and trembled; for the power of that Shape could vanquish even them. It was the form of a Female, with golden hair, crowned with a chaplet of withered leaves; her bosoms, of an exceeding beauty, lay bare to the wind, and an infant was clasped between them, hushed into a sleep so still, that neither the roar of the thunder, nor the livid lightning flashing from cloud to cloud, could even ruffle, much less arouse, the slumberer. And the face of the female was unutterably calm and sweet (though with a something of severe); there was no line nor wrinkle in the hueless brow; care never wrote its defacing characters upon that everlasting beauty. It knew no sorrow or change; ghostlike and shadowy floated on that Shape through the abyss of Time, governing the world with an unquestioned and noiseless sway. And the children of the green solitudes of the earth, the lovely fairies of my tale, shuddered as they gazed and recognized—the form of DEATH, —death vindicated.

"And why," said the beautiful Shape, with a voice soft as the last sighs of a dying babe,— "why trouble ye the air with spells? Mine is the hour and the empire, and the storm is the creature of my power. Far yonder to the west it sweeps over the sea, and the ship ceases to vex the waves; it smites the forest, and the destined tree, torn from its roots, feels the winter strip the gladness from its boughs no more! The roar of the elements is the herald of eternal stillness to their victims; and they who hear the progress of my power idly shudder at the coming of peace. And thou, O tender daughter of the fairy kings, why grieveest thou at a mortal's doom? Knowest thou not that sorrow cometh with years, and that to live is to mourn? Blessed is the flower that, nipped in its

early spring, feels not the blast that one by one scatters its blossoms around it, and leaves but the barren stem. Blessed are the young whom I clasp to my breast, and lull into the sleep which the storm cannot break, nor the morrow arouse to sorrow or to toil. The heart that is stilled in the bloom of its first emotions, that turns with its last throb to the eye of love, as yet unlearned in the possibility of change,— has exhausted already the wine of life, and is saved only from the lees. As the mother soothes to sleep the wail of her troubled child, I open my arms to the vexed spirit, and my bosom cradles the unquiet to repose!”

The fairies answered not, for a chill and a fear lay over them, and the Shape glided on; ever as it passed away through the veiling clouds they heard its low voice singing amidst the roar of the storm, as the dirge of the water-sprite over the vessel it hath lured into the whirlpool or the shoals.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THURMBERG. — A STORM UPON THE RHINE. — THE RUINS OF RHEINFELS. — PERIL UNFELT BY LOVE. — THE ECHO OF THE LURLEI-BERG. — ST. GOAR. — KAUB, GUTENFELS, AND PFALZGRAFENSTEIN. — A CERTAIN VASTNESS OF MIND IN THE FIRST HERMITS. — THE SCENERY OF THE RHINE TO BACHARACH.

Our party continued their voyage the next day, which was less bright than any they had yet experienced. The clouds swept on dull and heavy, suffering the sun only to break forth at scattered intervals. They wound round the curving bay which the Rhine forms in that part of its course, and gazed upon the ruins of Thurmberg, with the rich gardens that skirt the banks below. The last time Trevlyan had seen those ruins soaring against the sky, the green foliage at the foot of

the rocks, and the quiet village sequestered beneath, glassing its roofs and solitary tower upon the wave, it had been with a gay summer troop of light friends, who had paused on the opposite shore during the heats of noon, and, over wine and fruits, had mimicked the groups of Boccaccio, and intermingled the lute, the jest, the momentary love, and the laughing tale.

What a difference now in his thoughts, in the object of the voyage, in his present companions! The feet of years fall noiseless; we heed, we note them not, till tracking the same course we passed long since, we are startled to find how deep the impression they leave behind. To revisit the scenes of our youth is to commune with the ghost of ourselves.

At this time the clouds gathered rapidly along the heavens, and they were startled by the first peal of the thunder. Sudden and swift came on the storm, and Trevylyan trembled as he covered Gertrude's form with the rude boat-cloaks they had brought with them; the small vessel began to rock wildly to and fro upon the waters. High above them rose the vast dismantled ruins of Rheinfels, the lightning darting through its shattered casements and broken arches, and brightening the gloomy trees that here and there clothed the rocks, and tossed to the angry wind. Swift wheeled the water-birds over the river, dipping their plumage in the white foam, and uttering their discordant screams. A storm upon the Rhine has a grandeur it is in vain to paint. Its rocks, its foliage, the feudal ruins that everywhere rise from the lofty heights, speaking in characters of stern decay of many a former battle against time and tempest; the broad and rapid course of the legendary river,—all harmonize with the elementary strife; and you feel that to see the Rhine only in the sunshine is to be unconscious of its most majestic aspects. What baronial war had those ruins witnessed! From the rapine of the lordly tyrant of those battlements rose the first Confederation of the Rhine,—the great strife between the new time and the old, the town and the castle, the citizen and the chief. Gray and stern those ruins breasted the storm,—a type of the antique opinion which once manned them with armed serfs; and, yet

in ruins and decay, appeals from the victorious freedom it may no longer resist!

Clasped in Trevlyan's guardian arms, and her head pillowed on his breast, Gertrude felt nothing of the storm save its grandeur; and Trevlyan's voice whispered cheer and courage to her ear. She answered by a smile and a sigh, but not of pain. In the convulsions of nature we forget our own separate existence, our schemes, our projects, our fears; our dreams vanish back into their cells. One passion only the storm quells not, and the presence of Love mingles with the voice of the fiercest storms, as with the whispers of the southern wind. So she felt, as they were thus drawn close together, and as she strove to smile away the anxious terror from Trevlyan's gaze, a security, a delight; for peril is sweet even to the fears of woman, when it impresses upon her yet more vividly that she is beloved.

"A moment more and we reach the land," murmured Trevlyan.

"I wish it not," answered Gertrude, softly. But ere they got into St. Goar the rain descended in torrents, and even the thick coverings round Gertrude's form were not sufficient protection against it. Wet and dripping she reached the inn; but not then, nor for some days, was she sensible of the shock her decaying health had received.

The storm lasted but a few hours, and the sun afterwards broke forth so brightly, and the stream looked so inviting, that they yielded to Gertrude's earnest wish, and, taking a larger vessel, continued their course; they passed along the narrow and dangerous defile of the Gewirre, and the fearful whirlpool of the "Bank;" and on the shore to the left the enormous rock of Lurlei rose, huge and shapeless, on their gaze. In this place is a singular echo, and one of the boatmen wound a horn, which produced an almost supernatural music, — so wild, loud, and oft reverberated was its sound.

The river now curved along in a narrow and deep channel amongst rugged steeps, on which the westering sun cast long and uncouth shadows; and here the hermit, from whose sacred name the town of St. Goar derived its own, fixed his abode

and preached the religion of the Cross. "There was a certain vastness of mind," said Vane, "in the adoption of utter solitude, in which the first enthusiasts of our religion indulged. The remote desert, the solitary rock, the rude dwelling hollowed from the cave, the eternal commune with their own hearts, with nature, and their dreams of God,—all make a picture of severe and preterhuman grandeur. Say what we will of the necessity and charm of social life, there is a greatness about man when he dispenses with mankind."

"As to that," said Du——e, shrugging his shoulders, "there was probably very good wine in the neighbourhood, and the females' eyes about Oberwesel are singularly blue."

They now approached Oberwesel, another of the once imperial towns, and behind it beheld the remains of the castle of the illustrious family of Schomberg, the ancestors of the old hero of the Boyne. A little farther on, from the opposite shore, the castle of Gutenfels rose above the busy town of Kaub.

"Another of those scenes," said Trevelyhan, "celebrated equally by love and glory, for the castle's name is derived from that of the beautiful ladye of an emperor's passion; and below, upon a ridge in the steep, the great Gustavus issued forth his command to begin battle with the Spaniards."

"It looks peaceful enough now," said Vane, pointing to the craft that lay along the stream, and the green trees drooping over a curve in the bank. Beyond, in the middle of the stream itself, stands the lonely castle of Pfalzgrafenstein, sadly memorable as a prison to the more distinguished of criminals. How many pining eyes may have turned from those casements to the vine-clad hills of the free shore! how many indignant hearts have nursed the deep curses of hate in the dungeons below, and longed for the wave that dashed against the gray walls to force its way within and set them free!

Here the Rhine seems utterly bounded, shrunk into one of those delusive lakes into which it so frequently seems to change its course; and as you proceed, it is as if the waters were silently overflowing their channel and forcing their way into the clefts of the mountain shore. Passing the Werth

Island on one side and the castle of Stahleck on the other, our voyagers arrived at Bacharach, which, associating the feudal recollections with the classic, takes its name from the god of the vine; and as Du——e declared with peculiar emphasis, quaffing a large goblet of the peculiar liquor, “richly deserves the honour!”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VOYAGE TO BINGEN. — THE SIMPLE INCIDENTS IN THIS
TALE EXCUSED. — THE SITUATION AND CHARACTER OF GER-
TRUDE. — THE CONVERSATION OF THE LOVERS IN THE TEM-
PEST. — A FACT CONTRADICTED. — THOUGHTS OCCASIONED
BY A MADHOUSE AMONGST THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LAND-
SCAPES OF THE RHINE.

THE next day they again resumed their voyage, and Gertrude's spirits were more cheerful than usual. The air seemed to her lighter, and she breathed with a less painful effort; once more hope entered the breast of Trevlyan; and, as the vessel bounded on, their conversation was steeped in no sombre hues. When Gertrude's health permitted, no temper was so gay, yet so gently gay, as hers; and now the *naïve* sportiveness of her remarks called a smile to the placid lip of Vane, and smoothed the anxious front of Trevlyan himself; as for Du——e, who had much of the boon companion beneath his professional gravity, he broke out every now and then into snatches of French songs and drinking glees, which he declared were the result of the air of Bacharach. Thus conversing, the ruins of Furstenberg, and the echoing vale of Rheindeibach, glided past their sail; then the old town of Lorch, on the opposite bank (where the red wine is said first to have been made), with the green island before it in the water. Winding round, the stream showed castle upon castle alike in ruins, and built alike upon scarce accessible steepes. Then came the chapel of St. Clements and the opposing

village of Asmannshausen; the lofty Rossell, built at the extremest verge of the cliff; and now the tower of Hatto, celebrated by Southey's ballad, and the ancient town of Bingen. Here they paused a while from their voyage, with the intention of visiting more minutely the Rheingan, or valley of the Rhine.

It must occur to every one of my readers, that, in undertaking, as now, in these passages in the history of Trevlyan, scarcely so much a tale as an episode in real life, it is very difficult to offer any interest save of the most simple and unexciting kind. It is true that to Trevlyan every day, every hour, had its incident; but what are those incidents to others? A cloud in the sky; a smile from the lip of Gertrude,—these were to him far more full of events than had been the most varied scenes of his former adventurous career; but the history of the heart is not easily translated into language; and the world will not readily pause from its business to watch the alternations in the cheek of a dying girl.

In the immense sum of human existence what is a single unit? Every sod on which we tread is the grave of some former being; yet is there something that softens without enervating the heart in tracing in the life of another those emotions that all of us have known ourselves. For who is there that has not, in his progress through life, felt all its ordinary business arrested, and the varieties of fate commuted into one chronicle of the affections? Who has not watched over the passing away of some being, more to him at that epoch than all the world? And this unit, so trivial to the calculation of others, of what inestimable value was it not to him? Retracing in another such recollections, shadowed and mellowed down by time, we feel the wonderful sanctity of human life, we feel what emotions a single being can awake; what a world of hope may be buried in a single grave! And thus we keep alive within ourselves the soft springs of that morality which unites us with our kind, and sheds over the harsh scenes and turbulent contests of earth the colouring of a common love.

There is often, too, in the time of year in which such thoughts are presented to us, a certain harmony with the feel-

ings they awaken. As I write I hear the last sighs of the departing summer, and the sere and yellow leaf is visible in the green of nature. But when this book goes forth into the world, the year will have passed through a deeper cycle of decay; and the first melancholy signs of winter have breathed into the Universal Mind that sadness which associates itself readily with the memory of friends, of feelings, that are no more. The seasons, like ourselves, track their course by something of beauty, or of glory, that is left behind. As the traveller in the land of Palestine sees tomb after tomb rise before him, the landmarks of his way, and the only signs of the holiness of the soil, thus Memory wanders over the most sacred spots in its various world, and traces them but by the graves of the Past.

It was now that Gertrude began to feel the shock her frame had received in the storm upon the Rhine. Cold shiverings frequently seized her; her cough became more hollow, and her form trembled at the slightest breeze.

Vane grew seriously alarmed; he repented that he had yielded to Gertrude's wish of substituting the Rhine for the Tiber or the Arno; and would even now have hurried across the Alps to a warmer clime, if Du——e had not declared that she could not survive the journey, and that her sole chance of regaining her strength was rest. Gertrude herself, however, in the continued delusion of her disease, clung to the belief of recovery, and still supported the hopes of her father, and soothed, with secret talk of the future, the anguish of her betrothed. The reader may remember that in the most touching passage in the ancient tragedians, the most pathetic part of the most pathetic of human poets — the pleading speech of Iphigenia, when imploring for her prolonged life, she impresses you with so soft a picture of its innocence and its beauty, and in this Gertrude resembled the Greek's creation — that she felt, on the verge of death, all the flush, the glow, the loveliness of life. Her youth was filled with hope and many-coloured dreams; she loved, and the hues of morning slept upon the yet disenchanting earth. The heavens to her were not as the common sky; the wave had its peculiar music

to her ear, and the rustling leaves a pleasantness that none whose heart is not bathed in the love and sense of beauty could discern. Therefore it was, in future years, a thought of deep gratitude to Trevylyan that she was so little sensible of her danger; that the landscape caught not the gloom of the grave; and that, in the Greek phrase, "death found her sleeping amongst flowers."

At the end of a few days, another of those sudden turns, common to her malady, occurred in Gertrude's health; her youth and her happiness rallied against the encroaching tyrant, and for the ensuing fortnight she seemed once more within the bounds of hope. During this time they made several excursions into the Rheingau, and finished their tour at the ancient Heidelberg.

One morning, in these excursions, after threading the wood of Niederwald, they gained that small and fairy temple, which hanging lightly over the mountain's brow, commands one of the noblest landscapes of earth. There, seated side by side, the lovers looked over the beautiful world below; far to the left lay the happy islets, in the embrace of the Rhine, as it wound along the low and curving meadows that stretch away towards Nieder-Ingelheim and Mayence. Glistening in the distance, the opposite Nah swept by the Mause tower, and the ruins of Klopp, crowning the ancient Bingen, into the mother tide. There, on either side the town, were the mountains of St. Roch and Rupert, with some old monastic ruin saddening in the sun. But nearer, below the temple, contrasting all the other features of landscape, yawned a dark and rugged gulf, girt by cragged elms and mouldering towers, the very prototype of the abyss of time,—black and fathomless amidst ruin and desolation.

"I think sometimes," said Gertrude, "as in scenes like these we sit together, and rapt from the actual world, see only the enchantment that distance lends to our view,—I think sometimes what pleasure it will be hereafter to recall these hours. If ever you should love me less, I need only whisper to you, 'The Rhine,' and will not all the feelings you have now for me return?"

"Ah, there will never be occasion to recall my love for you, — it can never decay."

"What a strange thing is life!" said Gertrude; "how unconnected, how desultory seem all its links! Has this sweet pause from trouble, from the ordinary cares of life — has it anything in common with your past career, with your future? You will go into the great world; in a few years hence these moments of leisure and musing will be denied to you. The action that you love and court is a jealous sphere, — it allows no wandering, no repose. These moments will then seem to you but as yonder islands that stud the Rhine, — the stream lingers by them for a moment, and then hurries on in its rapid course; they vary, but they do not interrupt the tide."

"You are fanciful, my Gertrude; but your simile might be juster. Rather let these banks be as our lives, and this river the one thought that flows eternally by both, blessing each with undying freshness."

Gertrude smiled; and, as Trevlyan's arm encircled her, she sank her beautiful face upon his bosom, he covered it with his kisses, and she thought at the moment, that, even had she passed death, that embrace could have recalled her to life.

They pursued their course to Mayence, partly by land, partly along the river. One day, as returning from the vine-clad mountains of Johannisberg, which commands the whole of the Rheingau, the most beautiful valley in the world, they proceeded by water to the town of Ellfeld, Gertrude said, —

"There is a thought in your favourite poet which you have often repeated, and which I cannot think true, —

"'In nature there is nothing melancholy.'

To me, it seems as if a certain melancholy were inseparable from beauty; in the sunniest noon there is a sense of solitude and stillness which pervades the landscape, and even in the flush of life inspires us with a musing and tender sadness. Why is this?"

"I cannot tell," said Trevlyan, mournfully; "but I allow that it is true."

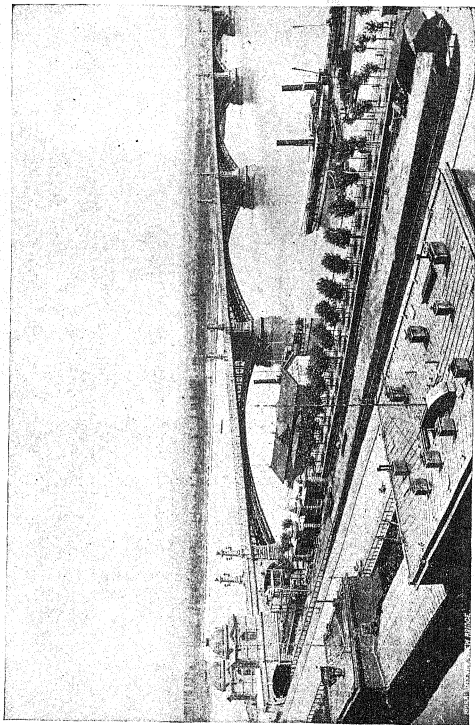
"It is as if," continued the romantic Gertrude, "the spirit

of the world spoke to us in the silence, and filled us with a sense of our mortality,—a whisper from the religion that belongs to nature, and is ever seeking to unite the earth with the reminiscences of Heaven. Ah, what without a heaven would be even love!—a perpetual terror of the separation that must one day come! If,” she resumed solemnly, after a momentary pause, and a shadow settled on her young face, “if it be true, Albert, that I must leave you soon — ”

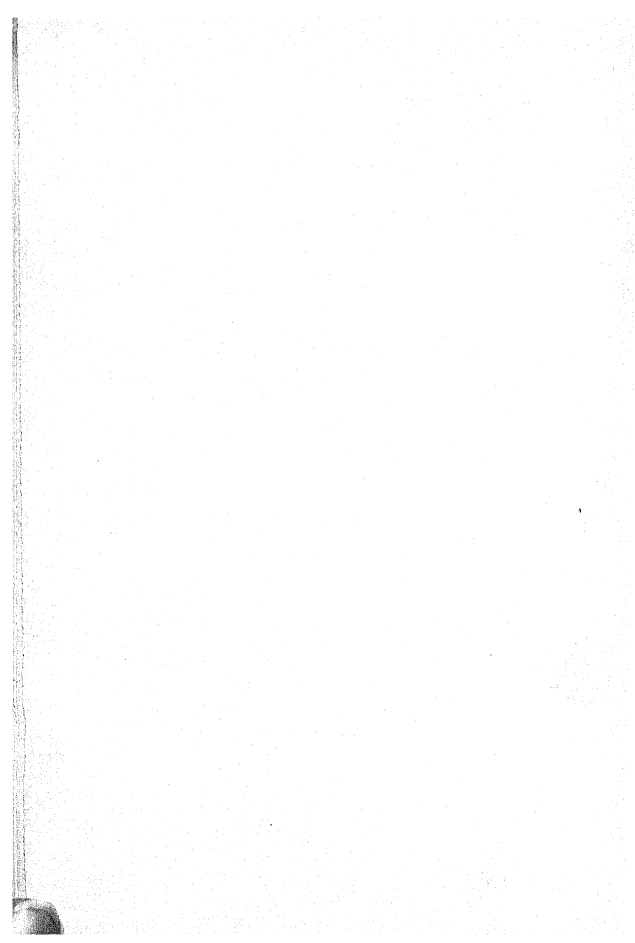
“It cannot! it cannot!” cried Trevlylan, wildly; “be still, be silent, I beseech you.”

“Look yonder,” said Du——e, breaking seasonably in upon the conversation of the lovers; “on that hill to the left, what once was an abbey is now an asylum for the insane. Does it not seem a quiet and serene abode for the unstrung and erring minds that tenant it? What a mystery is there in our conformation!—those strange and bewildered fancies which replace our solid reason, what a moral of our human weakness do they breathe!”

It does indeed induce a dark and singular train of thought, when, in the midst of these lovely scenes, we chance upon this lone retreat for those on whose eyes Nature, perhaps, smiles in vain. *Or is it in vain?* They look down upon the broad Rhine, with its tranquil isles: do their wild delusions endow the river with another name, and people the valleys with no living shapes? Does the broken mirror within reflect back the countenance of real things, or shadows and shapes, crossed, mingled, and bewildered,—the phantasma of a sick man’s dreams? Yet, perchance, one memory unscathed by the general ruin of the brain can make even the beautiful Rhine more beautiful than it is to the common eye; can calm it with the hues of departed love, and bids its possessor walk over its vine-clad mountains with the beings that have ceased to *be*! There, perhaps, the self-made monarch sits upon his throne and claims the vessels as his fleet, the waves and the valleys as his own; there, the enthusiast, blasted by the light of some imaginary creed, beholds the shapes of angels, and watches in the clouds round the setting sun the pavilions of God; there the victim of forsaken or perished love, mightier than the sor-



MAYENCE, NEW BRIDGE.



cerers of old, evokes the dead, or recalls the faithless by the philter of undying fancies. Ah, blessed art thou, the winged power of Imagination that is within us! conquering even grief, brightening even despair. Thou takest us from the world when reason can no longer bind us to it, and givest to the maniac the inspiration and the solace of the bard! Thou, the parent of the purer love, lingerest like love, when even ourself forsakes us, and lightest up the shattered chambers of the heart with the glory that makes a sanctity of decay.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELLFELD. — MAYENCE. — HEIDELBERG. — A CONVERSATION BETWEEN VANE AND THE GERMAN STUDENT. — THE RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG AND ITS SOLITARY HABITANT.

It was now the full noon; light clouds were bearing up towards the opposite banks of the Rhine, but over the Gothic towers of Ellfeld the sky spread blue and clear; the river danced beside the old gray walls with a sunny wave, and close at hand a vessel crowded with passengers, and loud with eager voices, gave a merry life to the scene. On the opposite bank the hills sloped away into the far horizon, and one slight skiff in the midst of the waters broke the solitary brightness of the noonday calm.

The town of Ellfeld was the gift of Otho the First to the Church; not far from thence is the crystal spring that gives its name to the delicious grape of Markbrunner.

"Ah," quoth Du——e, "doubtless the good bishops of Mayence made the best of the vicinity!"

They stayed some little time at this town, and visited the ruins of Scharfenstein; thence proceeding up the river, they passed Nieder Walluf, called the Gate of the Rheingau, and the luxuriant garden of Schierstein; thence, sailing by the

castle-seat of the Prince Nassau Usingen, and passing two long and narrow isles, they arrived at Mayence, as the sun shot his last rays upon the waters, gilding the proud cathedral-spire, and breaking the mists that began to gather behind, over the rocks of the Rheingau.

Ever memorable Mayence,—memorable alike for freedom and for song, within those walls how often woke the gallant music of the Troubadour; and how often beside that river did the heart of the maiden tremble to the lay! Within those walls the stout Walpoden first broached the great scheme of the Hanseatic league; and, more than all, O memorable Mayence, thou canst claim the first invention of the mightiest engine of human intellect,—the great leveller of power, the Demiurgus of the moral world,—the Press! Here too lived the maligned hero of the greatest drama of modern genius, the traditionary Faust, illustrating in himself the fate of his successors in dispensing knowledge,—held a monster for his wisdom, and consigned to the penalties of hell as a recompense for the benefits he had conferred on earth!

At Mayence, Gertrude heard so much and so constantly of Heidelberg, that she grew impatient to visit that enchanting town; and as Du——e considered the air of Heidelberg more pure and invigorating than that of Mayence, they resolved to fix within it their temporary residence. Alas! it was the place destined to close their brief and melancholy pilgrimage, and to become to the heart of Trevelyman the holiest spot which the earth contained,—the KAABA of the world. But Gertrude, unconscious of her fate, conversed gayly as their carriage rolled rapidly on, and, constantly alive to every new sensation, she touched with her characteristic vivacity on all that they had seen in their previous route. There is a great charm in the observations of one new to the world; if we ourselves have become somewhat tired of “its hack sights and sounds,” we hear in their freshness a voice from our own youth.

In the haunted valley of the Neckar, the most crystal of rivers, stands the town of Heidelberg. The shades of evening gathered round it as their heavy carriage rattled along the

antique streets, and not till the next day was Gertrude aware of all the unrivalled beauties that environ the place.

Vane, who was an early riser, went forth alone in the morning to reconnoitre the town; and as he was gazing on the tower of St. Peter, he heard himself suddenly accosted. He turned round and saw the German student whom they had met among the mountains of Taunus at his elbow.

"Monsieur has chosen well in coming hither," said the student; "and I trust our town will not disappoint his expectations." Vane answered with courtesy, and the German offering to accompany him in his walk, their conversation fell naturally on the life of a university, and the current education of the German people.

"It is surprising," said the student, "that men are eternally inventing new systems of education, and yet persevering in the old. How many years ago is it since Fichte predicted in the system of Pestalozzi the regeneration of the German people? What has it done? We admire, we praise, and we blunder on in the very course Pestalozzi proves to be erroneous. Certainly," continued the student, "there must be some radical defect in a system of culture in which genius is an exception, and dulness the result. Yet here, in our German universities, everything proves that education without equitable institutions avails little in the general formation of character. Here the young men of the colleges mix on the most equal terms; they are daring, romantic, enamoured of freedom even to its madness. They leave the University: no political career continues the train of mind they had acquired; they plunge into obscurity; live scattered and separate, and the student inebriated with Schiller sinks into the passive priest or the lethargic baron. His college career, so far from indicating his future life, exactly reverses it: he is brought up in one course in order to proceed in another. And this I hold to be the universal error of education in all countries; they conceive it a certain something to be finished at a certain age. They do not make it a part of the continuous history of life, but a wandering from it."

"You have been in England?" asked Vane.

"Yes; I have travelled over nearly the whole of it on foot. I was poor at that time, and imagining there was a sort of masonry between all men of letters, I inquired at each town for the *savants*, and asked money of them as a matter of course."

Vane almost laughed outright at the simplicity and *naïve* unconsciousness of degradation with which the student proclaimed himself a public beggar.

"And how did you generally succeed?"

"In most cases I was threatened with the stocks, and twice I was consigned by the *juge de paix* to the village police, to be passed to some mystic Mecca they were pleased to entitle 'a parish.' Ah" (continued the German with much *bonhomie*), "it was a pity to see in a great nation so much value attached to such a trifle as money. But what surprised me greatly was the tone of your poetry. Madame de Staël, who knew perhaps as much of England as she did of Germany, tells us that its chief character is the *chivalresque*; and, excepting only Scott, who, by the way, is *not* English, I did not find one chivalrous poet among you. Yet," continued the student, "between ourselves, I fancy that in our present age of civilization, there is an unexamined mistake in the general mind as to the value of poetry. It delights still as ever, but it has ceased to teach. The prose of the heart enlightens, touches, rouses, far more than poetry. Your most philosophical poets would be commonplace if turned into prose. Verse cannot contain the refining subtle thoughts which a great prose writer embodies; the rhyme eternally cripples it; it properly deals with the common problems of human nature, which are now hackneyed, and not with the nice and philosophizing corollaries which may be drawn from them. Thus, though it would seem at first a paradox, commonplace is more the element of poetry than of prose."

This sentiment charmed Vane, who had nothing of the poet about him; and he took the student to share their breakfast at the inn, with a complacency he rarely experienced at the remeeting with a new acquaintance.

After breakfast, our party proceeded through the town

towards the wonderful castle which is its chief attraction, and the noblest wreck of German grandeur.

And now pausing, the mountain yet unscaled, the stately ruin frowned upon them, girt by its massive walls and hanging terraces, round which from place to place clung the dwarfed and various foliage. High at the rear rose the huge mountain, covered, save at its extreme summit, with dark trees, and concealing in its mysterious breast the shadowy beings of the legendary world. But towards the ruins, and up a steep ascent, you may see a few scattered sheep thinly studing the broken ground. Aloft, above the ramparts, rose, desolate and huge, the Palace of the Electors of the Palatinate. In its broken walls you may trace the tokens of the lightning that blasted its ancient pomp, but still leaves in the vast extent of pile a fitting monument of the memory of Charlemagne. Below, in the distance, spread the plain far and spacious, till the shadowy river, with one solitary sail upon its breast, united the melancholy scene of earth with the autumnal sky.

"See," said Vane, pointing to two peasants who were conversing near them on the matters of their little trade, utterly unconscious of the associations of the spot, "see, after all that is said and done about human greatness, it is always the greatness of the few. Ages pass, and leave the poor herd, the mass of men, eternally the same,—hewers of wood and drawers of water. The pomp of princes has its ebb and flow, but the peasant sells his fruit as gayly to the stranger on the ruins as to the emperor in the palace."

"Will it be always so?" said the student.

"Let us hope not, for the sake of permanence in glory," said Trevlyan. "Had *a people* built yonder palace, its splendour would never have passed away."

Vane shrugged his shoulders, and Du——e took snuff.

But all the impressions produced by the castle at a distance are as nothing when you stand within its vast area and behold the architecture of all ages blended into one mighty ruin! The rich hues of the masonry, the sweeping façades—every description of building which man ever framed for war or for

luxury — is here; all having only the common character,—
RUIN. The feudal rampart, the yawning fosse, the rude
tower, the splendid arch, the strength of a fortress, the mag-
nificence of a palace,—all united, strike upon the soul like
the history of a fallen empire in all its epochs.

"There is one singular habitant of these ruins," said the
student,— "a solitary painter, who has dwelt here some
twenty years, companioned only by his Art. No other apart-
ment but that which he tenants is occupied by a human
being."

"What a poetical existence!" cried Gertrude, enchanted
with a solitude so full of associations.

"Perhaps so," said the cruel Vane, ever anxious to dispel
an illusion, "but more probably custom has deadened to him
all that overpowers ourselves with awe; and he may tread
among these ruins rather seeking to pick up some rude morsel
of antiquity, than feeding his imagination with the dim tradi-
tions that invest them with so august a poetry."

"Monsieur's conjecture has something of the truth in it,"
said the German; "but then the painter is a Frenchman."

There is a sense of fatality in the singular mournfulness
and majesty which belong to the ruins of Heidelberg, con-
trasting the vastness of the strength with the utterness of the
ruin. It has been twice struck with lightning, and is the
wreck of the elements, not of man; during the great siege it
sustained, the lightning is supposed to have struck the powder
magazine by accident.

What a scene for some great imaginative work! What a
mocking interference of the wrath of nature in the puny con-
tests of men! One stroke of "the red right arm" above us,
crushing the triumph of ages, and laughing to scorn the power
of the beleaguers and the valour of the besieged!

They passed the whole day among these stupendous ruins,
and felt, when they descended to their inn, as if they had left
the caverns of some mighty tomb.

CHAPTER XXX.

NO PART OF THE EARTH REALLY SOLITARY. — THE SONG OF THE FAIRIES. — THE SACRED SPOT. — THE WITCH OF THE EVIL WINDS. — THE SPELL AND THE DUTY OF THE FAIRIES.

BUT in what spot of the world is there ever utter solitude? The vanity of man supposes that loneliness is *his* absence! Who shall say what millions of spiritual beings glide invisibly among scenes apparently the most deserted? Or what know we of our own mechanism, that we should deny the possibility of life and motion to things that we cannot ourselves recognize?

At moonlight, in the Great Court of Heidelberg, on the borders of the shattered basin overgrown with weeds, the following song was heard by the melancholy shades that roam at night through the mouldering halls of old, and the gloomy hollows in the mountain of Heidelberg.

SONG OF THE FAIRIES IN THE RUINS OF HEIDELBERG.

From the woods and the glossy green,
With the wild thyme strewn ;
From the rivers whose crisp'd sheen
Is kissed by the trembling moon ;
While the dwarf looks out from his mountain cave,
And the erl king from his lair,
And the water-nymph from her moaning wave,
We skirr the limber air.

There's a smile on the vine-clad shore,
A smile on the castled heights ;
They dream back the days of yore,
And they smile at our roundel rites !
Our roundel rites !

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE.

Lightly we tread these halls around,
Lightly tread we;
Yet, hark! we have scared with a single sound
The moping owl on the breathless tree,
And the goblin sprites!
Ha, ha! we have scared with a single sound
The old gray owl on the breathless tree,
And the goblin sprites!

"They come not," said Pipalee; "yet the banquet is prepared, and the poor queen will be glad of some refreshment."

"What a pity! all the rose-leaves will be over-broiled," said Nip.

"Let us amuse ourselves with the old painter," quoth Trip, springing over the ruins.

"Well said," cried Pipalee and Nip; and all three, leaving my lord-treasurer amazed at their levity, whisked into the painter's apartment. Permitting them to throw the ink over their victim's papers, break his pencils, mix his colours, mislay his nightcap, and go whiz against his face in the shape of a great bat, till the astonished Frenchman began to think the pensive goblins of the place had taken a sprightly fit,—we hasten to a small green spot some little way from the town, in the valley of the Neckar, and by the banks of its silver stream. It was circled round by dark trees, save on that side bordered by the river. The wild-flowers sprang profusely from the turf, which yet was smooth and singularly green. And there was the German fairy describing a circle round the spot, and making his elvish spells; and Nymphalin sat drooping in the centre, shading her face, which was bowed down as the head of a water-lily, and weeping crystal tears.

There came a hollow murmur through the trees, and a rush as of a mighty wind, and a dark form emerged from the shadow and approached the spot.

The face was wrinkled and old, and stern with a malevolent and evil aspect. The frame was lean and gaunt, and supported by a staff, and a short gray mantle covered its bended shoulders.

"Things of the moonbeam!" said the form, in a shrill and

ghastly voice, "what want ye here; and why charm ye this spot from the coming of me and mine?"

"Dark witch of the blight and blast," answered the fairy, "THOU that nippest the herb in its tender youth, and eatest up the core of the soft bud; behold, it is but a small spot that the fairies claim from thy demesnes, and on which, through frost and heat, they will keep the herbage green and the air gentle in its sighs!"

"And, wherefore, O dweller in the crevices of the earth, wherefore wouldst thou guard this spot from the curses of the seasons?"

"We know by our instinct," answered the fairy, "that this spot will become the grave of one whom the fairies love; hither, by an unfelt influence, shall we guide her yet living steps; and in gazing upon this spot shall the desire of quiet and the resignation to death steal upon her soul. Behold, throughout the universe, all things are at war with one another,—the lion with the lamb; the serpent with the bird; and even the gentlest bird itself with the moth of the air, or the worm of the humble earth! What then to men, and to the spirits transcending men, is so lovely and so sacred as a being that harmeth none; what so beautiful as Innocence; what so mournful as its untimely tomb? And shall not that tomb be sacred; shall it not be our peculiar care? May we not mourn over it as at the passing away of some fair miracle in Nature, too tender to endure, too rare to be forgotten? It is for this, O dread waker of the blast, that the fairies would consecrate this little spot; for this they would charm away from its tranquil turf the wandering ghoul and the evil children of the night. Here, not the ill-omened owl, nor the blind bat, nor the unclean worm shall come. And thou shouldst have neither will nor power to nip the flowers of spring, nor sear the green herbs of summer. Is it not, dark mother of the evil winds,—is it not *our* immemorial office to tend the grave of Innocence, and keep fresh the flowers round the resting-place of Virgin Love?"

Then the witch drew her cloak round her, and muttered to herself, and without further answer turned away among the

trees and vanished, as the breath of the east wind, which goeth with her as her comrade, scattered the melancholy leaves along her path!

CHAPTER XXXI.

GERTRUDE AND TREVLYAN, WHEN THE FORMER IS AWAKENED TO THE APPROACH OF DEATH.

THE next day, Gertrude and her companions went along the banks of the haunted Neckar. She had passed a sleepless and painful night, and her evanescent and childlike spirits had sobered down into a melancholy and thoughtful mood. She leaned back in an open carriage with Trevlyan, ever constant, by her side, while Du——e and Vane rode slowly in advance. Trevlyan tried in vain to cheer her; even his attempts (usually so eagerly received) to charm her duller moments by tale or legend were, in this instance, fruitless. She shook her head gently, pressed his hand, and said, "No, dear Trevlyan, no; even your art fails to-day, but your kindness never!" and pressing his hand to her lips, she burst passionately into tears.

Alarmed and anxious, he clasped her to his breast, and strove to lift her face, as it drooped on its resting-place, and kiss away its tears. "Oh," said she, at length, "do not despise my weakness; I am overcome by my own thoughts: I look upon the world, and see that it is fair and good; I look upon you, and I see all that I can venerate and adore. Life seems to me so sweet, and the earth so lovely; can you wonder, then, that I should shrink at the thought of death? Nay, interrupt me not, dear Albert; the thought must be borne and braved. I have not cherished, I have not yielded to it through my long-increasing illness; but there have been times when it has forced itself upon me, and now, *now* more palpably than ever. Do not think me weak and childish. I never feared

death till I knew you; but to see you no more,— never again to touch this dear hand, never to thank you for your love, never to be sensible of your care,— to lie down and sleep, *and never, never, once more to dream of you!* Ah, that is a bitter thought! but I will brave it,— yes, brave it as one worthy of your regard.”

Trevylyan, choked by his emotions, covered his own face with his hands, and, leaning back in the carriage, vainly struggled with his sobs.

“Perhaps,” she said, yet ever and anon clinging to the hope that had utterly abandoned *him*, “perhaps, I may yet deceive myself; and my love for you, which seems to me as if it could conquer death, may bear me up against this fell disease. The hope to live with you, to watch you, to share your high dreams, and oh! above all, to soothe you in sorrow and sickness, as you have soothed me — has not that hope something that may support even this sinking frame? And who shall love thee as I love; who see thee as I have seen; who pray for thee in gratitude and tears as I have prayed? Oh, Albert, so little am I jealous of you, so little do I think of myself in comparison, that I could close my eyes happily on the world if I knew that what I could be to thee another will be!”

“Gertrude,” said Trevylyan, and lifting up his colourless face, he gazed upon her with an earnest and calm solemnity, “Gertrude, let us be united at once! If Fate must sever us, let her cut the last tie too; let us feel that at least upon earth we have been all in all to each other; let us defy death, even as it frowns upon us. Be mine to-morrow — this day — oh, God! be mine!”

Over even that pale countenance, beneath whose hues the lamp of life so faintly fluttered, a deep, radiant flush passed one moment, lighting up the beautiful ruin with the glow of maiden youth and impassioned hope, and then died rapidly away.

“No, Albert,” she said sighing; “no! it must not be. Far easier would come the pang to you, while yet we are not wholly united; and for my own part I am selfish, and feel as if I should leave a tenderer remembrance on your heart thus

parted,—tenderer, but not so sad. I would not wish you to feel yourself widowed to my memory; I would not cling like a blight to your fair prospects of the future. Remember me rather as a dream,—as something never wholly won, and therefore asking no fidelity but that of kind and forbearing thoughts. Do you remember one evening as we sailed along the Rhine—ah! happy, happy hour!—that we heard from the banks a strain of music,—not so skilfully played as to be worth listening to for itself, but, suiting as it did the hour and the scene, we remained silent, that we might hear it the better; and when it died insensibly upon the waters, a certain melancholy stole over us; we felt that a something that softened the landscape had gone, and we conversed less lightly than before? Just so, my own loved, my own adored Trevelyman, just so is the influence that our brief love, your poor Gertrude's existence, should bequeath to your remembrance. A sound, a presence, should haunt you for a little while, but no more, ere you again become sensible of the glories that court your way!"

But as Gertrude said this, she turned to Trevelyman, and seeing his agony, she could refrain no longer; she felt that to soothe was to insult; and throwing herself upon his breast, they mingled their tears together.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SPOT TO BE BURIED IN.

On their return homeward, Du——e took the third seat in the carriage, and endeavoured, with his usual vivacity, to cheer the spirits of his companions; and such was the elasticity of Gertrude's nature, that with her, he, to a certain degree, succeeded in his kindly attempt. Quickly alive to the charms of scenery, she entered by degrees into the external beauties which every turn in the road opened to their view;

and the silvery smoothness of the river, that made the constant attraction of the landscape, the serenity of the time, and the clearness of the heavens, tended to tranquillize a mind that, like a sunflower, so instinctively turned from the shadow to the light.

Once Du——e stopped the carriage in a spot of herbage, bedded among the trees, and said to Gertrude, "We are now in one of the many places along the Neckar which your favourite traditions serve to consecrate. Amidst yonder copses, in the early ages of Christianity, there dwelt a hermit, who, though young in years, was renowned for the sanctity of his life. None knew whence he came, nor for what cause he had limited the circle of life to the seclusion of his cell. He rarely spoke, save when his ghostly advice or his kindly prayer was needed; he lived upon herbs, and the wild fruits which the peasants brought to his cave; and every morning and every evening he came to this spot to fill his pitcher from the water of the stream. But here he was observed to linger long after his task was done, and to sit gazing upon the walls of a convent which then rose upon the opposite side of the bank, though now even its ruins are gone. Gradually his health gave way beneath the austerities he practised; and one evening he was found by some fishermen insensible on the turf. They bore him for medical aid to the opposite convent; and one of the sisterhood, the daughter of a prince, was summoned to attend the recluse. But when his eyes opened upon hers, a sudden recognition appeared to seize both. He spoke; and the sister threw herself on the couch of the dying man, and shrieked forth a name, the most famous in the surrounding country,—the name of a once noted minstrel, who, in those rude times, had mingled the poet with the lawless chief, and was supposed, years since, to have fallen in one of the desperate frays between prince and outlaw, which were then common; storming the very castle which held her, now the pious nun, then the beauty and presider over the tournament and galliard. In her arms the spirit of the hermit passed away. She survived but a few hours, and left conjecture busy with a history to which it never obtained further

clew. Many a troubadour in later times furnished forth in poetry the details which truth refused to supply; and the place where the hermit at sunrise and sunset ever came to gaze upon the convent became consecrated by song."

The place invested with this legendary interest was impressed with a singular aspect of melancholy quiet; wild-flowers yet lingered on the turf, whose grassy sedges gently overhung the Neckar, that murmured amidst them with a plaintive music. Not a wind stirred the trees; but at a little distance from the place, the spire of a church rose amidst the copse; and, as they paused, they suddenly heard from the holy building the bell that summons to the burial of the dead. It came on the ear in such harmony with the spot, with the hour, with the breathing calm, that it thrilled to the heart of each with an inexpressible power. It was like the voice of another world, that amidst the solitude of nature summoned the lulled spirit from the cares of this; it invited, not repulsed, and had in its tone more of softness than of awe.

Gertrude turned, with tears starting to her eyes, and, laying her hand on Trevlyan's, whispered, "In such a spot, so calm, so sequestered, yet in the neighbourhood of the house of God, would I wish this broken frame to be consigned to rest."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS TALE.

From that day Gertrude's spirit resumed its wonted cheerfulness, and for the ensuing week she never reverted to her approaching fate; she seemed once more to have grown unconscious of its limit. Perhaps she sought, anxious for Trevlyan to the last, not to throw additional gloom over their earthly separation; or, perhaps, once steadily regarding the certainty of her doom, its terrors vanished. The chords of thought, vibrating to the subtlest emotions, may be changed by a single

incident, or in a single hour; a sound of sacred music, a green and quiet burial-place, may convert the form of death into the aspect of an angel. And therefore wisely, and with a beautiful lore, did the Greeks strip the grave of its unreal gloom; wisely did they body forth the great principle of Rest by solemn and lovely images, unconscious of the northern madness that made a Spectre of REPOSE!

But while Gertrude's *spirit* resumed its healthful tone, her *frame* rapidly declined, and a few days now could do the ravage of months a little while before.

One evening, amidst the desolate ruins of Heidelberg, Trevelyman, who had gone forth alone to indulge the thoughts which he strove to stifle in Gertrude's presence, suddenly encountered Vane. That calm and almost callous pupil of the adversities of the world was standing alone, and gazing upon the shattered casements and riven tower, through which the sun now cast its slant and parting ray.

Trevelyman, who had never loved this cold and unsusceptible man, save for the sake of Gertrude, felt now almost a hatred creep over him, as he thought in such a time, and with death fastening upon the flower of his house, he could yet be calm, and smile, and muse, and moralize, and play the common part of the world. He strode slowly up to him, and standing full before him, said with a hollow voice and writhing smile, "You amuse yourself pleasantly, sir: this is a fine scene; and to meditate over griefs a thousand years hushed to rest is better than watching over a sick girl and eating away your heart with fear!"

Vane looked at him quietly, but intently, and made no reply.

"Vane!" continued Trevelyman, with the same preternatural attempt at calm, "Vane, in a few days all will be over, and you and I, the things, the plotters, the false men of the world, will be left alone,—left by the sole being that graces our dull life, that makes by her love either of us worthy of a thought!"

Vane started, and turned away his face. "You are cruel," said he, with a faltering voice.

"What, man!" shouted Trevlyan, seizing him abruptly by the arm, "can *you* feel? Is your cold heart touched? Come then," added he, with a wild laugh, "come, let us be friends!"

Vane drew himself aside, with a certain dignity, that impressed Trevlyan even at that hour. "Some years hence," said he, "you will be called cold as I am; sorrow will teach you the wisdom of indifference — it is a bitter school, sir,— a bitter school! But think you that I do indeed see unmoved my last hope shivered,—the last tie that binds me to my kind? No, no! I feel it as a man may feel; I cloak it as a man grown gray in misfortune should do! My child is more to me than your betrothed to you; for you are young and wealthy, and life smiles before you; but I — no more — sir,— no more!"

"Forgive me," said Trevlyan, humbly, "I have wronged you; but Gertrude is an excuse for any crime of love; and now listen to my last prayer,—give her to me, even on the verge of the grave. Death cannot seize her in the arms, in the vigils of a love like mine."

Vane shuddered. "It were to wed the dead," said he. "No!"

Trevlyan drew back, and without another word, hurried away; he returned to the town; he sought, with methodical calmness, the owner of the piece of ground in which Gertrude had wished to be buried. He purchased it, and that very night he sought the priest of a neighbouring church, and directed it should be consecrated according to the due rite and ceremonial.

The priest, an aged and pious man, was struck by the request, and the air of him who made it.

"Shall it be done forthwith, sir?" said he, hesitating.

"Forthwith," answered Trevlyan, with a calm smile,— "a bridegroom, you know, is naturally impatient."

For the next three days, Gertrude was so ill as to be confined to her bed. All that time Trevlyan sat outside her door, without speaking, scarcely lifting his eyes from the ground. The attendants passed to and fro,—he heeded them not; perhaps as even the foreign menials turned aside and

wiped their eyes, and prayed God to comfort him, he required compassion less at that time than any other. There is a stupefaction in woe, and the heart sleeps without a pang when exhausted by its afflictions.

But on the fourth day Gertrude rose, and was carried down (how changed, yet how lovely ever!) to their common apartment. During those three days the priest had been with her often, and her spirit, full of religion from her childhood, had been unspeakably soothed by his comfort. She took food from the hand of Trevlyan; she smiled upon him as sweetly as of old. She conversed with him, though with a faint voice, and at broken intervals. But she felt no pain; life ebbed away gradually, and without a pang. "My father," she said to Vane, whose features still bore their usual calm, whatever might have passed within, "I know that you will grieve when I am gone more than the world might guess; for I alone know what you were years ago, ere friends left you and fortune frowned, and ere my poor mother died. But do not — do not believe that hope and comfort leave you with me. Till the heaven pass away from the earth there shall be comfort and hope for all."

They did not lodge in the town, but had fixed their abode on its outskirts, and within sight of the Neckar; and from the window they saw a light sail gliding gayly by till it passed, and solitude once more rested upon the waters.

"The sail passes from our eyes," said Gertrude, pointing to it, "but still it glides on as happily though we see it no more; and I feel — yes, Father, I feel — I know that it is so with us. We glide down the river of time from the eyes of men, but we cease not the less to *be*!"

And now, as the twilight descended, she expressed a wish, before she retired to rest, to be left alone with Trevlyan. He was not then sitting by her side, for he would not trust himself to do so, but with his face averted, at a little distance from her. She called him by his name; he answered not, nor turned. Weak as she was, she raised herself from the sofa, and crept gently along the floor till she came to him, and sank in his arms.

"Ah, unkind!" she said, "unkind for once! Will you turn away from me? Come, let us look once more on the river: see! the night darkens over it. Our pleasant voyage, the type of our love, is finished; our sail may be unfurled no more. Never again can your voice soothe the lassitude of sickness with the legend and the song; the course is run, the vessel is broken up, night closes over its fragments; but now, in this hour, love me, be kind to me as ever. Still let me be your own Gertrude, still let me close my eyes this night, as before, with the sweet consciousness that I am loved."

"Loved! O Gertrude! speak not to me thus!"

"Come, that is yourself again!" and she clung with weak arms caressingly to his breast. "And now," she said more solemnly, "let us forget that we are mortal; let us remember only that life is a part, not the whole, of our career; let us feel in this soft hour, and while yet we are unsevered, the presence of The Eternal that is within us, so that it shall not be as death, but as a short absence; and when once the pang of parting is over, you must think only that we are shortly to meet again. What! you turn from me still? See, I do not weep or grieve, I have conquered the pang of our absence; will you be outdone by me? Do you remember, Albert, that you once told me how the wisest of the sages of old, in prison, and before death, consoled his friends with the proof of the immortality of the soul? Is it not a consolation; does it not suffice; or will you deem it wise from the lips of wisdom, but vain from the lips of love?"

"Hush, hush!" said Trevlyan, wildly; "or I shall think you an angel already."

But let us close this commune, and leave unrevealed the *last* sacred words that ever passed between them upon earth.

When Vane and the physician stole back softly into the room, Trevlyan motioned to them to be still. "She sleeps," he whispered; "hush!" And in truth, wearied out by her own emotions, and lulled by the belief that she had soothed one with whom her heart dwelt now, as ever, she had fallen into sleep, or it may be, insensibility, on his breast. There as she lay, so fair, so frail, so delicate, the twilight deepened

into shade, and the first star, like the hope of the future, broke forth upon the darkness of the earth.

Nothing could equal the stillness without, save that which lay breathlessly within. For not one of the group stirred or spoke, and Trevlyan, bending over her, never took his eyes from her face, watching the parted lips, and fancying that he imbibed the breath. Alas, the breath was stilled! from sleep to death she had glided without a sigh,—happy, most happy in that death! cradled in the arms of unchanged love, and brightened in her last thought by the consciousness of innocence and the assurances of Heaven!

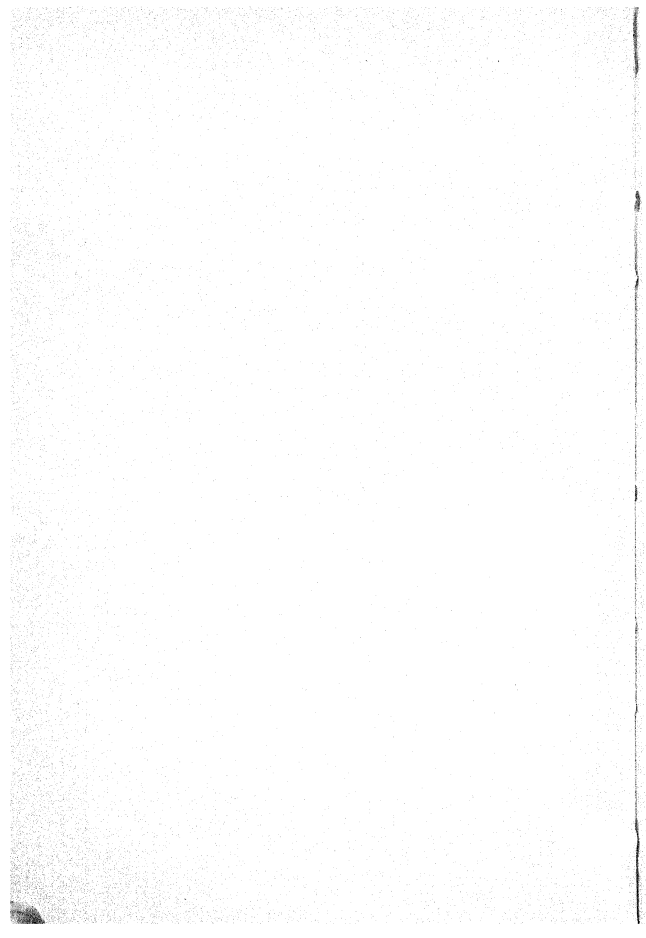
Trevlyan, after a long sojourn on the Continent, returned to England. He plunged into active life, and became what is termed in this age of little names a distinguished and noted man. But what was mainly remarkable in his future conduct was his impatience of rest. He eagerly courted all occupations, even of the most varied and motley kind,—business, letters, ambition, pleasure. He suffered no pause in his career; and leisure to him was as care to others. He lived in the world, as the worldly do, discharging its duties, fostering its affections, and fulfilling its career. But there was a deep and wintry change within him,—*the sunlight of his life was gone*; the loveliness of romance had left the earth. The stem was proof as heretofore to the blast, but the green leaves were severed from it forever, and the bird had forsaken its boughs. Once he had idolized the beauty that is born of song, the glory and the ardour that invest such thoughts as are not of our common clay; but the well of enthusiasm was dried up, and the golden bowl was broken at the fountain. With Gertrude the poetry of existence was gone. As she herself had described her loss, a music had ceased to breathe along the face of things; and though the bark might sail on as swiftly, and the stream swell with as proud a wave, a something that had vibrated on the heart was still, and the magic of the voyage was no more.

And Gertrude sleeps on the spot where she wished her last couch to be made; and far — oh, far dearer is that small spot

on the distant banks of the gliding Neckar to Trevelyán's heart than all the broad lands and fertile fields of his ancestral domain. The turf too preserves its emerald greenness; and it would seem to me that the field flowers spring up by the sides of the simple tomb even more profusely than of old. A curve in the bank breaks the tide of the Neckar; and therefore its stream pauses, as if to linger reluctantly, by that solitary grave, and to mourn among the rustling sedges ere it passes on. And I have thought, when I last looked upon that quiet place, when I saw the turf so fresh, and the flowers so bright of hue, that ærial hands might *indeed* tend the sod; that it was by no *imaginary* spells that I summoned the fairies to my tale; that in truth, and with vigils constant though unseen, they yet kept from all polluting footsteps, and from the harsher influence of the seasons, the grave of one who so loved their race; and who, in her gentle and spotless virtue claimed kindred with the beautiful Ideal of the world. Is there one of us who has not known some being for whom it seemed not too wild a fantasy to indulge such dreams?

THE END.

THE COMING RACE.

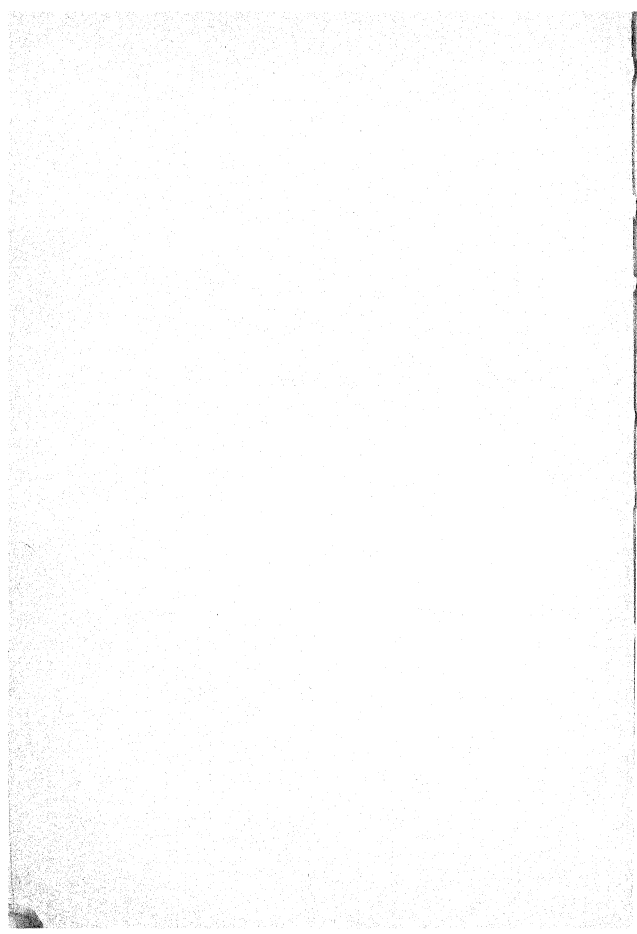


Inscribed

TO

MAX MÜLLER,

IN TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION.



THE COMING RACE.

CHAPTER I.

I AM a native of —, in the United States of America. My ancestors migrated from England in the reign of Charles II.; and my grandfather was not undistinguished in the War of Independence. My family, therefore, enjoyed a somewhat high social position in right of birth; and being also opulent, they were considered disqualified for the public service. My father once ran for Congress, but was signally defeated by his tailor. After that event he interfered little in politics, and lived much in his library. I was the eldest of three sons, and sent at the age of sixteen to the old country, partly to complete my literary education, partly to commence my commercial training in a mercantile firm at Liverpool. My father died shortly after I was twenty-one; and being left well off, and having a taste for travel and adventure, I resigned, for a time, all pursuit of the almighty dollar, and became a desultory wanderer over the face of the earth.

In the year 18—, happening to be in —, I was invited by a professional engineer, with whom I had made acquaintance, to visit the recesses of the — mine, upon which he was employed.

The reader will understand, ere he close this narrative, my reason for concealing all clew to the district of which I write, and will perhaps thank me for refraining from any description that may tend to its discovery.

Let me say, then, as briefly as possible, that I accompanied the engineer into the interior of the mine, and became so strangely fascinated by its gloomy wonders, and so interested

in my friend's explorations, that I prolonged my stay in the neighbourhood, and descended daily, for some weeks, into the vaults and galleries hollowed by nature and art beneath the surface of the earth. The engineer was persuaded that far richer deposits of mineral wealth than had yet been detected would be found in a new shaft that had been commenced under his operations. In piercing this shaft we came one day upon a chasm jagged and seemingly charred at the sides, as if burst asunder at some distant period by volcanic fires. Down this chasm my friend caused himself to be lowered in a "cage," having first tested the atmosphere by the safety-lamp. He remained nearly an hour in the abyss. When he returned he was very pale, and with an anxious, thoughtful expression of face, very different from its ordinary character, which was open, cheerful, and fearless.

He said briefly that the descent appeared to him unsafe, and leading to no result; and suspending further operations in the shaft, we returned to the more familiar parts of the mine.

All the rest of that day the engineer seemed pre-occupied by some absorbing thought. He was unusually taciturn, and there was a scared, bewildered look in his eyes, as that of a man who has seen a ghost. At night, as we two were sitting alone in the lodging we shared together near the mouth of the mine, I said to my friend,—

"Tell me frankly what you saw in that chasm; I am sure it was something strange and terrible. Whatever it be, it has left your mind in a state of doubt. In such a case two heads are better than one. Confide in me."

The engineer long endeavoured to evade my inquiries; but as, while he spoke, he helped himself unconsciously out of the brandy-flask to a degree to which he was wholly unaccustomed, for he was a very temperate man, his reserve gradually melted away. He who would keep himself to himself should imitate the dumb animals, and drink water. At last he said, "I will tell you all. When the cage stopped, I found myself on a ridge of rock; and below me, the chasm, taking a slanting direction, shot down to a considerable depth, the darkness of which my lamp could not have penetrated. But

through it, to my infinite surprise, streamed upward a steady brilliant light. Could it be any volcanic fire? In that case, surely I should have felt the heat. Still, if on this there was doubt, it was of the utmost importance to our common safety to clear it up. I examined the sides of the descent, and found that I could venture to trust myself to the irregular projections or ledges, at least for some way. I left the cage, and clambered down. As I drew near and nearer to the light, the chasm became wider, and at last I saw, to my unspeakable amaze, a broad level road at the bottom of the abyss, illumined as far as the eye could reach by what seemed artificial gas-lamps placed at regular intervals, as in the thoroughfare of a great city; and I heard confusedly at a distance a hum as of human voices. I know, of course, that no rival miners are at work in this district. Whose could be those voices? What human hands could have levelled that road and marshalled those lamps?

"The superstitious belief, common to miners, that gnomes or fiends dwell within the bowels of the earth, began to seize me. I shuddered at the thought of descending farther and braving the inhabitants of this nether valley. Nor indeed could I have done so without ropes, as from the spot I had reached to the bottom of the chasm the sides of the rock sank down abrupt, smooth, and sheer. I retraced my steps with some difficulty. Now I have told you all."

"You will descend again?"

"I ought, yet I feel as if I durst not."

"A trusty companion halves the journey and doubles the courage. I will go with you. We will provide ourselves with ropes of suitable length and strength, and — pardon me — you must not drink more to-night. Our hands and feet must be steady and firm to-morrow."

CHAPTER II.

WITH the morning my friend's nerves were re-braced, and he was not less excited by curiosity than myself. Perhaps more; for he evidently believed in his own story, and I felt considerable doubt of it: not that he would have wilfully told an untruth, but that I thought he must have been under one of those hallucinations which seize on our fancy or our nerves in solitary, unaccustomed places, and in which we give shape to the formless and sound to the dumb.

We selected six veteran miners to watch our descent; and as the cage held only one at a time, the engineer descended first; and when he had gained the ledge at which he had before halted, the cage re-rose for me. I soon gained his side. We had provided ourselves with a strong coil of rope.

The light struck on my sight as it had done the day before on my friend's. The hollow through which it came sloped diagonally; it seemed to me a diffused atmospheric light, not like that from fire, but soft and silvery, as from a northern star. Quitting the cage, we descended, one after the other, easily enough, owing to the juts in the side, till we reached the place at which my friend had previously halted, and which was a projection just spacious enough to allow us to stand abreast. From this spot the chasm widened rapidly, like the lower end of a vast funnel, and I saw distinctly the valley, the road, the lamps which my companion had described. He had exaggerated nothing. I heard the sounds he had heard,—a mingled indescribable hum as of voices and a dull tramp as of feet. Straining my eye farther down, I clearly beheld at a distance the outline of some large building. It could not be mere natural rock,—it was too symmetrical, with huge heavy Egyptian-like columns, and the whole lighted as from within. I had about me a small pocket-telescope, and by the aid of this I could distinguish, near the building I mention, two forms which seemed human,

though I could not be sure. At least they were living, for they moved, and both vanished within the building. We now proceeded to attach the end of the rope we had brought with us to the ledge on which we stood, by the aid of clamps and grappling-hooks, with which, as well as with necessary tools, we were provided.

We were almost silent in our work. We toiled like men afraid to speak to each other. One end of the rope being thus apparently made firm to the ledge, the other, to which we fastened a fragment of the rock, rested on the ground below, a distance of some fifty feet. I was a younger and a more active man than my companion, and having served on board ship in my boyhood, this mode of transit was more familiar to me than to him. In a whisper I claimed the precedence, so that when I gained the ground I might serve to hold the rope more steady for his descent. I got safely to the ground beneath, and the engineer now began to lower himself. But he had scarcely accomplished ten feet of the descent, when the fastenings, which we had fancied so secure, gave way, or rather the rock itself proved treacherous and crumbled beneath the strain; and the unhappy man was precipitated to the bottom, falling just at my feet, and bringing down with his fall splinters of the rock, one of which, fortunately but a small one, struck and for the time stunned me. When I recovered my senses I saw my companion an inanimate mass beside me, life utterly extinct. While I was bending over his corpse in grief and horror, I heard close at hand a strange sound between a snort and a hiss; and turning instinctively to the quarter from which it came, I saw emerging from a dark fissure in the rock a vast and terrible head, with open jaws and dull, ghastly, hungry eyes,—the head of a monstrous reptile resembling that of the crocodile or alligator, but infinitely larger than the largest creature of that kind I had ever beheld in my travels. I started to my feet and fled down the valley at my utmost speed. I stopped at last, ashamed of my panic and my flight, and returned to the spot on which I had left the body of my friend. It was gone; doubtless the monster had already drawn it into its den and devoured it. The rope

and the grappling-hooks still lay where they had fallen, but they afforded me no chance of return; it was impossible to re-attach them to the rock above, and the sides of the rock were too sheer and smooth for human steps to clamber. I was alone in this strange world, amidst the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER III.

SLOWLY and cautiously I went my solitary way down the lamplit road and towards the large building I have described. The road itself seemed like a great Alpine pass, skirting rocky mountains, of which the one through whose chasms I had descended formed a link. Deep below to the left lay a vast valley, which presented to my astonished eye the unmistakable evidences of art and culture. There were fields covered with a strange vegetation, similar to none I have seen above the earth; the colour of it not green, but rather of a dull leaden hue or of a golden red.

There were lakes and rivulets which seemed to have been curved into artificial banks; some of pure water, others that shone like pools of naphtha. At my right hand, ravines and defiles opened amidst the rocks, with passes between, evidently constructed by art, and bordered by trees resembling, for the most part, gigantic ferns, with exquisite varieties of feathery foliage, and stems like those of the palm-tree. Others were more like the cane-plant, but taller, bearing large clusters of flowers. Others, again, had the form of enormous fungi, with short thick stems supporting a wide dome-like roof, from which either rose or drooped long and slender branches. The whole scene behind, before, and beside me, far as the eye could reach, was brilliant with innumerable lamps. The world without a sun was bright and warm as an Italian landscape at noon, but the air less oppressive, the heat softer. Nor was the scene before me void of signs of habitation. I could distinguish at a dis-

tance, whether on the banks of lake or rivulet, or half-way upon eminences, embedded amidst the vegetation, buildings that must surely be the homes of men. I could even discover, though far off, forms that appeared to me human moving amidst the landscape. As I paused to gaze, I saw to the right, gliding quickly through the air, what appeared a small boat, impelled by sails shaped like wings. It soon passed out of sight, descending amidst the shades of a forest. Right above me there was no sky, but only a cavernous roof. This roof grew higher and higher at the distance of the landscapes beyond, till it became imperceptible, as an atmosphere of haze formed itself beneath.

Continuing my walk, I started — from a bush that resembled a great tangle of seaweeds, interspersed with fern-like shrubs and plants of large leafage shaped like that of the aloe or prickly pear — a curious animal about the size and shape of a deer. But as, after bounding away a few paces, it turned round and gazed at me inquisitively, I perceived that it was not like any species of deer now extant above the earth, but it brought instantly to my recollection a plaster cast I had seen in some museum of a variety of the elk stag, said to have existed before the Deluge. The creature seemed tame enough, and, after inspecting me a moment or two, began to graze on the singular herbage around, undismayed and careless.

CHAPTER IV.

I now came in full sight of the building. Yes, it had been made by hands, and hollowed partly out of a great rock. I should have supposed it at the first glance to have been of the earliest form of Egyptian architecture. It was fronted by huge columns, tapering upward from massive plinths, and with capitals that, as I came nearer, I perceived to be more ornamental and more fantastically graceful than Egyptian architecture allows. As the Corinthian capital mimics the

leaf of the acanthus, so the capitals of these columns imitated the foliage of the vegetation neighbouring them, some aloe-like, some fern-like. And now there came out of this building a form, human,—was it human? It stood on the broad way and looked around, beheld me and approached. It came within a few yards of me, and at the sight and presence of it an indescribable awe and tremor seized me, rooting my feet to the ground. It reminded me of symbolical images of Genius or Demon that are seen on Etruscan vases or limned on the walls of Eastern sepulchres,—images that borrow the outlines of man, and are yet of another race. It was tall, not gigantic, but tall as the tallest men below the height of giants. Its chief covering seemed to me to be composed of large wings folded over its breast and reaching to its knees; the rest of its attire was composed of an under tunic and leggings of some thin fibrous material. It wore on its head a kind of tiara that shone with jewels, and carried in its right hand a slender staff of bright metal like polished steel. But the face! it was that which inspired my awe and my terror. It was the face of man, but yet of a type of man distinct from our known extant races. The nearest approach to it in outline and expression is the face of the sculptured sphinx, so regular in its calm, intellectual, mysterious beauty. Its colour was peculiar, more like that of the red man than any other variety of our species, and yet different from it,—a richer and a softer hue, with large black eyes, deep and brilliant, and brows arched as a semicircle. The face was beardless; but a nameless something in the aspect, tranquil though the expression, and beautiful though the features, roused that instinct of danger which the sight of a tiger or serpent arouses. I felt that this man-like image was endowed with forces inimical to man. As it drew near, a cold shudder came over me. I fell on my knees and covered my face with my hands.

CHAPTER V.

A voice accosted me — a very quiet and very musical key of voice — in a language of which I could not understand a word, but it served to dispel my fear. I uncovered my face and looked up. The stranger (I could scarcely bring myself to call him man) surveyed me with an eye that seemed to read the very depths of my heart. He then placed his left hand on my forehead, and with the staff in his right gently touched my shoulder. The effect of this double contact was magical. In place of my former terror there passed into me a sense of contentment, of joy, of confidence in myself and in the being before me. I rose and spoke in my own language. He listened to me with apparent attention, but with a slight surprise in his looks; and shook his head, as if to signify that I was not understood. He then took me by the hand and led me in silence to the building. The entrance was open,— indeed, there was no door to it. We entered an immense hall, lighted by the same kind of lustre as in the scene without, but diffusing a fragrant odour. The floor was in large tessellated blocks of precious metals, and partly covered with a sort of mat-like carpeting. A strain of low music, above and around, undulated as if from invisible instruments, seeming to belong naturally to the place, just as the sound of murmuring waters belongs to a rocky landscape, or the warble of birds to vernal groves.

A figure, in a simpler garb than that of my guide, but of similar fashion, was standing motionless near the threshold. My guide touched it twice with his staff, and it put itself into a rapid and gliding movement, skimming noiselessly over the floor. Gazing on it, I then saw that it was no living form, but a mechanical automaton. It might be two minutes after it vanished through a doorless opening, half screened by curtains at the other end of the hall, when through the same opening advanced a boy of about twelve years old, with features closely

resembling those of my guide, so that they seemed to me evidently son and father. On seeing me the child uttered a cry, and lifted a staff like that borne by my guide, as if in menace. At a word from the elder he dropped it. The two then conversed for some moments, examining me while they spoke. The child touched my garments, and stroked my face with evident curiosity, uttering a sound like a laugh, but with an hilarity more subdued than the mirth of our laughter. Presently the roof of the hall opened, and a platform descended, seemingly constructed on the same principle as the "lifts" used in hotels and warehouses for mounting from one story to another.

The stranger placed himself and the child on the platform, and motioned to me to do the same, which I did. We ascended quickly and safely, and alighted in the midst of a corridor with doorways on either side.

Through one of these doorways I was conducted into a chamber fitted up with an Oriental splendour; the walls were tessellated with spars and metals and uncut jewels; cushions and divans abounded; apertures as for windows, but unglazed, were made in the chamber, opening to the floor; and as I passed along I observed that these openings led into spacious balconies, and commanded views of the illumined landscape without. In cages suspended from the ceiling there were birds of strange form and bright plumage, which at our entrance set up a chorus of song, modulated into tune, as is that of our piping bullfinches. A delicious fragrance, from censers of gold elaborately sculptured, filled the air. Several automata, like the one I had seen, stood dumb and motionless by the walls. The stranger placed me beside him on a divan, and again spoke to me, and again I spoke, but without the least advance towards understanding each other.

But now I began to feel the effects of the blow I received from the splinters of the falling rock more acutely than I had done at first.

There came over me a sense of sickly faintness, accompanied with acute, lancinating pains in the head and neck. I sank back on the seat, and strove in vain to stifle a groan. On

this the child, who had hitherto seemed to eye me with distrust or dislike, knelt by my side to support me; taking one of my hands in both his own, he approached his lips to my forehead, breathing on it softly. In a few moments my pain ceased; a drowsy, happy calm crept over me; I fell asleep.

How long I remained in this state I know not, but when I woke I felt perfectly restored. My eyes opened upon a group of silent forms, seated around me in the gravity and quietude of Orientals, — all more or less like the first stranger; the same mantling wings, the same fashion of garment, the same sphinx-like faces, with the deep dark eyes and red man's colour; above all, the same type of race, — race akin to man's, but infinitely stronger of form and grander of aspect, and inspiring the same unutterable feeling of dread. Yet each countenance was mild and tranquil, and even kindly in its expression; and strangely enough, it seemed to me that in this very calm and benignity consisted the secret of the dread which the countenances inspired. They seemed as void of the lines and shadows which care and sorrow, and passion and sin, leave upon the faces of men, as are the faces of sculptured gods, or as, in the eyes of Christian mourners, seem the peaceful brows of the dead.

I felt a warm hand on my shoulder; it was the child's. In his eyes there was a sort of lofty pity and tenderness, such as that with which we may gaze on some suffering bird or butterfly. I shrank from that touch, I shrank from that eye. I was vaguely impressed with a belief that, had he so pleased, that child could have killed me as easily as a man can kill a bird or a butterfly. The child seemed pained at my repugnance, quitted me, and placed himself beside one of the windows. The others continued to converse with each other in a low tone, and by their glances towards me I could perceive that I was the object of their conversation. One in especial seemed to be urging some proposal affecting me on the being whom I had first met, and this last by his gesture seemed about to assent to it, when the child suddenly quitted his post by the window, placed himself between me and the other forms, as if in protection, and spoke quickly and eagerly. By

some intuition or instinct I felt that the child I had before so dreaded was pleading in my behalf. Ere he had ceased another stranger entered the room. He appeared older than the rest, though not old; his countenance, less smoothly serene than theirs, though equally regular in its features, seemed to me to have more the touch of a humanity akin to my own. He listened quietly to the words addressed to him, first by my guide, next by two others of the group, and lastly by the child; then turned towards myself, and addressed me, not by words, but by signs and gestures. These I fancied that I perfectly understood, and I was not mistaken. I comprehended that he inquired whence I came. I extended my arm and pointed towards the road which had led me from the chasm in the rock; then an idea seized me. I drew forth my pocket-book, and sketched on one of its blank leaves a rough design of the ledge of the rock, the rope, myself clinging to it; then of the cavernous rock below, the head of the reptile, the lifeless form of my friend. I gave this primitive kind of hieroglyph to my interrogator, who, after inspecting it gravely, handed it to his next neighbour, and it thus passed round the group. The being I had at first encountered then said a few words, and the child, who approached and looked at my drawing, nodded as if he comprehended its purport, and, returning to the window, expanded the wings attached to his form, shook them once or twice, and then launched himself into space without. I started up in amaze, and hastened to the window. The child was already in the air, buoyed on his wings, which he did not flap to and fro as a bird does, but which were elevated over his head, and seemed to bear him steadily aloft without effort of his own. His flight seemed as swift as any eagle's; and I observed that it was towards the rock whence I had descended, of which the outline loomed visible in the brilliant atmosphere. In a very few minutes he returned, skimming through the opening from which he had gone, and dropping on the floor the rope and grappling-hooks I had left at the descent from the chasm. Some words in a low tone passed between the beings present. One of the group touched an automaton, which started forward and glided

from the room; then the last comer, who had addressed me by gestures, rose, took me by the hand, and led me into the corridor. There the platform by which I had mounted awaited us; we placed ourselves on it, and were lowered into the hall below. My new companion, still holding me by the hand, conducted me from the building into a street (so to speak) that stretched beyond it, with buildings on either side, separated from each other by gardens bright with rich-coloured vegetation and strange flowers. Interspersed amidst these gardens, which were divided from each other by low walls, or walking slowly along the road, were many forms similar to those I had already seen. Some of the passers-by, on observing me, approached my guide, evidently by their tones, looks, and gestures addressing to him inquiries about myself. In a few moments a crowd collected round us, examining me with great interest, as if I were some rare wild animal. Yet even in gratifying their curiosity they preserved a grave and courteous demeanour; and after a few words from my guide, who seemed to me to deprecate obstruction in our road, they fell back with a stately inclination of head, and resumed their own way with tranquil indifference. Midway in this thoroughfare we stopped at a building that differed from those we had hitherto passed, inasmuch as it formed three sides of a vast court, at the angles of which were lofty pyramidal towers; in the open space between the sides was a circular fountain of colossal dimensions, and throwing up a dazzling spray of what seemed to me fire. We entered the building through an open doorway and came into an enormous hall, in which were several groups of children, all apparently employed in work as at some great factory. There was a huge engine in the wall which was in full play, with wheels and cylinders, and resembling our own steam-engines, except that it was richly ornamented with precious stones and metals, and appeared to emit a pale phosphorescent atmosphere of shifting light. Many of the children were at some mysterious work on this machinery, others were seated before tables. I was not allowed to linger long enough to examine into the nature of their employment. Not one young voice was heard, not one young face turned to

gaze on us. They were all still and indifferent as may be ghosts, through the midst of which pass unnoticed the forms of the living.

Quitting this hall, my guide led me through a gallery richly painted in compartments, with a barbaric mixture of gold in the colours, like pictures by Louis Cranach. The subjects described on these walls appeared to my glance as intended to illustrate events in the history of the race amidst which I was admitted. In all there were figures, most of them like the manlike creatures I had seen, but not all in the same fashion of garb, nor all with wings. There were also the effigies of various animals and birds wholly strange to me, with backgrounds depicting landscapes or buildings. So far as my imperfect knowledge of the pictorial art would allow me to form an opinion, these paintings seemed very accurate in design and very rich in colouring, showing a perfect knowledge of perspective, but their details not arranged according to the rules of composition acknowledged by our artists,—wanting, as it were, a centre; so that the effect was vague, scattered, confused, bewildering; they were like heterogeneous fragments of a dream of art.

We now came into a room of moderate size, in which was assembled what I afterwards knew to be the family of my guide, seated at a table spread as for repast. The forms thus grouped were those of my guide's wife, his daughter, and two sons. I recognized at once the difference between the two sexes, though the two females were of taller stature and ampler proportions than the males; and their countenances, if still more symmetrical in outline and contour, were devoid of the softness and timidity of expression which give charm to the face of woman as seen on the earth above. The wife wore no wings, the daughter wore wings longer than those of the males.

My guide uttered a few words, on which all the persons seated rose, and with that peculiar mildness of look and manner which I have before noticed, and which is, in truth, the common attribute of this formidable race, they saluted me according to their fashion, which consists in laying the right

hand very gently on the head and uttering a soft sibilant monosyllable,—S. Si, equivalent to "Welcome."

The mistress of the house then seated me beside her, and heaped a golden platter before me from one of the dishes.

While I ate (and though the viands were new to me, I marvelled more at the delicacy than the strangeness of their flavour), my companions conversed quietly, and, so far as I could detect, with polite avoidance of any direct reference to myself, or any obtrusive scrutiny of my appearance. Yet I was the first creature of that variety of the human race to which I belong that they had ever beheld, and was consequently regarded by them as a most curious and abnormal phenomenon. But all rudeness is unknown to this people, and the youngest child is taught to despise any vehement emotional demonstration. When the meal was ended, my guide again took me by the hand, and, re-entering the gallery, touched a metallic plate inscribed with strange figures, and which I rightly conjectured to be of the nature of our telegraphs. A platform descended, but this time we mounted to a much greater height than in the former building, and found ourselves in a room of moderate dimensions, and which in its general character had much that might be familiar to the associations of a visitor from the upper world. There were shelves on the wall containing what appeared to be books, and indeed were so; mostly very small, like our diamond duodecimos, shaped in the fashion of our volumes, and bound in fine sheets of metal. There were several curious-looking pieces of mechanism scattered about, apparently models, such as might be seen in the study of any professional mechanician. Four automata (mechanical contrivances which, with these people, answer the ordinary purposes of domestic service) stood phantom-like at each angle in the wall. In a recess was a low couch, or bed with pillows. A window, with curtains of some fibrous material drawn aside, opened upon a large balcony. My host stepped out into the balcony; I followed him. We were on the uppermost story of one of the angular pyramids; the view beyond was of a wild and solemn beauty impossible to describe,—the vast

ranges of precipitous rock which formed the distant background; the intermediate valleys of mystic many-coloured herbage; the flash of waters, many of them like streams of roseate flame; the serene lustre diffused over all by myriads of lamps, combined to form a whole of which no words of mine can convey adequate description,—so splendid was it, yet so sombre; so lovely, yet so awful.

But my attention was soon diverted from these nether landscapes. Suddenly there arose, as from the streets below, a burst of joyous music; then a winged form soared into the space; another, as in chase of the first, another and another; others after others, till the crowd grew thick and the number countless. But how describe the fantastic grace of these forms in their undulating movements! They appeared engaged in some sport or amusement, now forming into opposite squadrons; now scattering; now each group threading the other, soaring, descending, interweaving, severing,—all in measured time to the music below, as if in the dance of the fabled Peri.

I turned my gaze on my host in a feverish wonder. I ventured to place my hand on the large wings that lay folded on his breast, and in doing so a slight shock as of electricity passed through me. I recoiled in fear; my host smiled, and, as if courteously to gratify my curiosity, slowly expanded his pinions. I observed that his garment beneath then became dilated as a bladder that fills with air. The arms seemed to slide into the wings, and in another moment he had launched himself into the luminous atmosphere, and hovered there, still, and with outspread wings, as an eagle that basks in the sun. Then, rapidly as an eagle swoops, he rushed downwards into the midst of one of the groups, skimming through the mist, and as suddenly again soaring aloft. Thereon, three forms, in one of which I thought to recognize my host's daughter, detached themselves from the rest, and followed him as a bird sportively follows a bird. My eyes, dazzled with the lights and bewildered by the throngs, ceased to distinguish the gyrations and evolutions of these winged playmates, till presently my host re-emerged from the crowd and alighted at my side.

The strangeness of all I had seen began now to operate fast on my senses; my mind itself began to wander. Though not inclined to be superstitious, nor hitherto believing that man could be brought into bodily communication with demons, I felt the terror and the wild excitement with which, in the Gothic ages, a traveller might have persuaded himself that he witnessed a *sabbat* of fiends and witches. I have a vague recollection of having attempted with vehement gesticulation, and forms of exorcism, and loud incoherent words, to repel my courteous and indulgent host; of his mild endeavours to calm and soothe me; of his intelligent conjecture that my fright and bewilderment were occasioned by the difference of form and movement between us, which the wings that had excited my marvelling curiosity had, in exercise, made still more strongly perceptible; of the gentle smile with which he had sought to dispel my alarm by dropping the wings to the ground and endeavouring to show me that they were but a mechanical contrivance. That sudden transformation did but increase my horror, and as extreme fright often shows itself by extreme daring, I sprang at his throat like a wild beast. On an instant I was felled to the ground as by an electric shock, and the last confused images floating before my sight ere I became wholly insensible were the form of my host kneeling beside me with one hand on my forehead, and the beautiful calm face of his daughter, with large, deep, inscrutable eyes intently fixed upon my own.

CHAPTER VI.

I REMAINED in this unconscious state, as I afterwards learned, for many days, even for some weeks, according to our computation of time. When I recovered I was in a strange room, my host and all his family were gathered round me, and to my utter amaze my host's daughter accosted me in my own language with but a slightly foreign accent.

"How do you feel?" she asked.

It was some moments before I could overcome my surprise enough to falter out, "You know my language? How? Who and what are you?"

My host smiled, and motioned to one of his sons, who then took from a table a number of thin metallic sheets on which were traced drawings of various figures,—a house, a tree, a bird, a man, etc.

In these designs I recognized my own style of drawing. Under each figure was written the name of it in my language, and in my writing; and in another handwriting a word strange to me beneath it.

Said the host, "Thus we began; and my daughter Zee, who belongs to the College of Sages, has been your instructress and ours too."

Zee then placed before me other metallic sheets, on which, in my writing, words first, and then sentences, were inscribed; under each word and each sentence strange characters in another hand. Rallying my senses, I comprehended that thus a rude dictionary had been effected. Had it been done while I was dreaming? "That is enough now," said Zee, in a tone of command. "Repose and take food."

CHAPTER VII.

A room to myself was assigned to me in this vast edifice. It was prettily and fantastically arranged, but without any of the splendour of metal work or gems which was displayed in the more public apartments. The walls were hung with a variegated matting made from the stalks and fibres of plants, and the floor carpeted with the same.

The bed was without curtains, its supports of iron resting on balls of crystal; the coverings, of a thin white substance resembling cotton. There were sundry shelves containing

books. A curtained recess communicated with an aviary filled with singing-birds, of which I did not recognize one resembling those I have seen on earth, except a beautiful species of dove, though this was distinguished from our doves by a tall crest of bluish plumes. All these birds had been trained to sing in artful tunes, and greatly exceeded the skill of our piping bullfinches, which can rarely achieve more than two tunes, and cannot, I believe, sing those in concert. One might have supposed one's self at an opera in listening to the voices in my aviary. There were duets and trios, and quartettes and choruses, all arranged as in one piece of music. Did I want to silence the birds? I had but to draw a curtain over the aviary, and their song hushed as they found themselves left in the dark. Another opening formed a window, not glazed, but on touching a spring, a shutter ascended from the floor, formed of some substance less transparent than glass, but still sufficiently pellucid to allow a softened view of the scene without. To this window was attached a balcony, or rather hanging-garden, wherein grew many graceful plants and brilliant flowers. The apartment and its appurtenances had thus a character, if strange in detail, still familiar, as a whole, to modern notions of luxury, and would have excited admiration if found attached to the apartments of an English duchess or a fashionable French author. Before I arrived this was Zee's chamber; she had hospitably assigned it to me.

Some hours after the waking up which is described in my last chapter, I was lying alone on my couch, trying to fix my thoughts on conjecture as to the nature and genus of the people amongst whom I was thrown, when my host and his daughter Zee entered the room. My host, still speaking my native language, inquired, with much politeness, whether it would be agreeable to me to converse, or if I preferred solitude. I replied that I should feel much honoured and obliged by the opportunity offered me to express my gratitude for the hospitality and civilities I had received in a country to which I was a stranger, and to learn enough of its customs and manners not to offend through ignorance.

As I spoke, I had of course risen from my couch; but Zee,

much to my confusion, curtly ordered me to lie down again, and there was something in her voice and eye, gentle as both were, that compelled my obedience. She then seated herself unconcernedly at the foot of my bed, while her father took his place on a divan a few feet distant.

"But what part of the world do you come from," asked my host, "that we should appear so strange to you, and you to us? I have seen individual specimens of nearly all the races differing from our own, except the primeval savages who dwell in the most desolate and remote recesses of uncultivated nature, unacquainted with other light than that they obtain from volcanic fires, and contented to grope their way in the dark, as do many creeping, crawling, and even flying things. But certainly you cannot be a member of those barbarous tribes, nor, on the other hand, do you seem to belong to any civilized people."

I was somewhat nettled at this last observation, and replied that I had the honour to belong to one of the most civilized nations of the earth; and that, so far as light was concerned, while I admired the ingenuity and disregard of expense with which my host and his fellow-citizens had contrived to illumine the regions unpenetrated by the rays of the sun, yet I could not conceive how any who had once beheld the orbs of heaven could compare to their lustre the artificial lights invented by the necessities of man. But my host said he had seen specimens of most of the races differing from his own, save the wretched barbarians he had mentioned. Now, was it possible that he had never been on the surface of the earth, or could he only be referring to communities buried within its entrails?

My host was for some moments silent; his countenance showed a degree of surprise which the people of that race very rarely manifest under any circumstances, howsoever extraordinary. But Zee was more intelligent, and exclaimed, "So you see, my father, that there is truth in the old tradition; there always is truth in every tradition commonly believed in all times and by all tribes."

"Zee," said my host, mildly, "you belong to the College of

Sages, and ought to be wiser than I am; but, as chief of the Light-preserving Council, it is my duty to take nothing for granted till it is proved to the evidence of my own senses." Then, turning to me, he asked me several questions about the surface of the earth and the heavenly bodies; upon which, though I answered him to the best of my knowledge, my answers seemed not to satisfy nor convince him. He shook his head quietly, and, changing the subject rather abruptly, asked how I had come down from what he was pleased to call one world to the other. I answered that under the surface of the earth there were mines containing minerals, or metals, essential to our wants and our progress in all arts and industries; and I then briefly explained the manner in which, while exploring one of these mines, I and my ill-fated friend had obtained a glimpse of the regions into which we had descended, and how the descent had cost him his life,—appealing to the rope and grappling-hooks that the child had brought to the house in which I had been at first received, as a witness of the truthfulness of my story.

My host then proceeded to question me as to the habits and modes of life among the races on the upper earth, more especially among those considered to be the most advanced in that civilization which he was pleased to define "the art of diffusing throughout a community the tranquil happiness which belongs to a virtuous and well-ordered household." Naturally desiring to represent in the most favourable colours the world from which I came, I touched but slightly, though indulgently, on the antiquated and decaying institutions of Europe, in order to expatiate on the present grandeur and prospective pre-eminence of that glorious American Republic, in which Europe enviously seeks its model and tremblingly foresees its doom. Selecting for an example of the social life of the United States that city in which progress advances at the fastest rate, I indulged in an animated description of the moral habits of New York. Mortified to see, by the faces of my listeners, that I did not make the favourable impression I had anticipated, I elevated my theme, dwelling on the excellence of democratic institutions, their promotion of tranquil

happiness by the government of party, and the mode in which they diffused such happiness throughout the community by preferring, for the exercise of power and the acquisition of honours, the lowliest citizens in point of property, education, and character. Fortunately recollecting the peroration of a speech, on the purifying influences of American democracy and their destined spread over the world, made by a certain eloquent senator (for whose vote in the Senate a Railway Company, to which my two brothers belonged, had just paid twenty thousand dollars), I wound up by repeating its glowing predictions of the magnificent future that smiled upon mankind,—when the flag of freedom should float over an entire continent, and two hundred millions of intelligent citizens, accustomed from infancy to the daily use of revolvers, should apply to a cowering universe the doctrine of the Patriot Monroe.

When I had concluded my host gently shook his head, and fell into a musing study, making a sign to me and his daughter to remain silent while he reflected; and after a time he said, in a very earnest and solemn tone, "If you think as you say, that you, though a stranger, have received kindness at the hands of me and mine, I adjure you to reveal nothing to any other of our people respecting the world from which you came, unless, on consideration, I give you permission to do so. Do you consent to this request?"

"Of course I pledge my word to it," said I, somewhat amazed; and I extended my right hand to grasp his. But he placed my hand gently on his forehead and his own right hand on my breast, which is the custom among this race in all matters of promise or verbal obligations. Then turning to his daughter, he said, "And you, Zee, will not repeat to any one what the stranger has said, or may say, to me or to you, of a world other than our own." Zee rose and kissed her father on the temples, saying, with a smile, "A Gy's tongue is wanton, but love can fetter it fast; and if, my father, you fear lest a chance word from me or yourself could expose our community to danger, by a desire to explore a world beyond us, will not a wave of the *vril*, properly impelled, wash even the

memory of what we have heard the stranger say out of the tablets of the brain?"

"What is vril?" I asked.

Therewith Zee began to enter into an explanation of which I understood very little, for there is no word in any language I know which is an exact synonym for vril. I should call it electricity, except that it comprehends in its manifold branches other forces of nature, to which, in our scientific nomenclature, differing names are assigned, such as magnetism, galvanism, etc. These people consider that in vril they have arrived at the unity in natural energetic agencies, which has been conjectured by many philosophers above ground, and which Faraday thus intimates under the more cautious term of "correlation": —

"I have long held an opinion," says that illustrious experimentalist, "almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest have one common origin; or, in other words, are so directly related and mutually dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action."

These subterranean philosophers assert that, by one operation of vril, which Faraday would perhaps call "atmospheric magnetism," they can influence the variations of temperature, — in plain words, the weather; that by other operations, akin to those ascribed to mesmerism, electro-biology, odic force, etc., but applied scientifically through vril conductors, they can exercise influence over minds, and bodies animal and vegetable, to an extent not surpassed in the romances of our mystics. To all such agencies they give the common name of "vril." Zee asked me if, in my world, it was not known that all the faculties of the mind could be quickened to a degree unknown in the waking state, by trance or vision, in which the thoughts of one brain could be transmitted to another, and knowledge be thus rapidly interchanged. I replied that there were among us stories told of such trance or vision, and that I had heard much and seen something of the mode in which they were artificially effected, as in mesmeric clairvoyance;

but that these practices had fallen much into disuse or contempt, partly because of the gross impostures to which they had been made subservient, and partly because, even where the effects upon certain abnormal constitutions were genuinely produced, the effects, when fairly examined and analyzed, were very unsatisfactory,—not to be relied upon for any systematic truthfulness or any practical purpose, and rendered very mischievous to credulous persons by the superstitions they tended to produce. Zee received my answers with much benignant attention, and said that similar instances of abuse and credulity had been familiar to their own scientific experience in the infancy of their knowledge and while the properties of vril were misapprehended, but that she reserved further discussion on this subject till I was more fitted to enter into it. She contented herself with adding that it was through the agency of vril, while I had been placed in the state of trance, that I had been made acquainted with the rudiments of their language; and that she and her father, who, alone of the family, took the pains to watch the experiment, had acquired a greater proportionate knowledge of my language than I of their own,—partly because my language was much simpler than theirs, comprising far less of complex ideas; and partly because their organization was, by hereditary culture, much more ductile and more readily capable of acquiring knowledge than mine. At this I secretly demurred; and having had, in the course of a practical life, to sharpen my wits, whether at home or in travel, I could not allow that my cerebral organization could possibly be duller than that of people who had lived all their lives by lamplight. However, while I was thus thinking, Zee quietly pointed her forefinger at my forehead and sent me to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN I once more awoke I saw by my bedside the child who had brought the rope and grappling-hooks to the house in which I had been first received, and which, as I afterwards learned, was the residence of the chief magistrate of the tribe. The child, whose name was Taë (pronounced Tar-ëë), was the magistrate's eldest son. I found that during my last sleep or trance I had made still greater advance in the language of the country, and could converse with comparative ease and fluency.

This child was singularly handsome, even for the beautiful race to which he belonged, with a countenance very manly in aspect for his years, and with a more vivacious and energetic expression than I had hitherto seen in the serene and passionless faces of the men. He brought me the tablet on which I had drawn the mode of my descent, and had also sketched the head of the horrible reptile that had scared me from my friend's corpse. Pointing to that part of the drawing, Taë put to me a few questions respecting the size and form of the monster, and the cave or chasm from which it had emerged. His interest in my answers seemed so grave as to divert him for a while from any curiosity as to myself or my antecedents; but to my great embarrassment, seeing how I was pledged to my host, he was just beginning to ask me where I came from, when Zee fortunately entered, and, overhearing him, said, "Taë, give to our guest any information he may desire, but ask none from him in return. To question him who he is, whence he comes, or wherefore he is here, would be a breach of the law which my father has laid down for this house."

"So be it," said Taë, pressing his hand to his heart; and from that moment till the one in which I saw him last, this child, with whom I became very intimate, never once put to me any of the questions thus interdicted.

CHAPTER IX.

It was not for some time, and until, by repeated trances, if they are so to be called, my mind became better prepared to interchange ideas with my entertainers, and more fully to comprehend differences of manners and customs, at first too strange to my experience to be seized by my reason, that I was enabled to gather the following details respecting the origin and history of this subterranean population, as portion of one great family race called the "Ana."

According to the earliest traditions, the remote progenitors of the race had once tenanted a world above the surface of that in which their descendants dwelt. Myths of that world were still preserved in their archives, and in those myths were legends of a vaulted dome in which the lamps were lighted by no human hand; but such legends were considered by most commentators as allegorical fables. According to these traditions the earth itself, at the date to which the traditions ascend, was not indeed in its infancy, but in the throes and travail of transition from one form of development to another, and subject to many violent revolutions of nature. By one of such revolutions, that portion of the upper world inhabited by the ancestors of this race had been subjected to inundations, not rapid, but gradual and uncontrollable, in which all, save a scanty remnant, were submerged and perished. Whether this be a record of our historical and sacred Deluge, or of some earlier one contended for by geologists, I do not pretend to conjecture; though, according to the chronology of this people as compared with that of Newton, it must have been many thousands of years before the time of Noah. On the other hand, the account of these writers does not harmonize with the opinions most in vogue among geological authorities, inasmuch as it places the existence of a human race upon earth at dates long anterior to that assigned to the

terrestrial formation adapted to the introduction of *mammalia*. A band of the ill-fated race, thus invaded by the Flood, had, during the march of the waters, taken refuge in caverns amidst the loftier rocks, and, wandering through these hollows, they lost sight of the upper world forever. Indeed, the whole face of the earth had been changed by this great revulsion; land had been turned into sea, sea into land. In the bowels of the inner earth even now, I was informed as a positive fact, might be discovered the remains of human habitation,—habitation not in huts and caverns, but in vast cities whose ruins attest the civilization of races which flourished before the age of Noah, and are not to be classified with those genera to which philosophy ascribes the use of flint and the ignorance of iron.

The fugitives had carried with them the knowledge of the arts they had practised above ground,—arts of culture and civilization. Their earliest want must have been that of supplying below the earth the light they had lost above it; and at no time, even in the traditional period, do the races, of which the one I now sojourned with formed a tribe, seem to have been unacquainted with the art of extracting light from gases or manganese or petroleum. They had been accustomed in their former state to contend with the rude forces of nature; and indeed the lengthened battle they had fought with their conqueror Ocean, which had taken centuries in its spread, had quickened their skill in curbing waters into dikes and channels. To this skill they owed their preservation in their new abode. "For many generations," said my host, with a sort of contempt and horror, "these primitive forefathers are said to have degraded their rank and shortened their lives by eating the flesh of animals, many varieties of which had, like themselves, escaped the Deluge, and sought shelter in the hollows of the earth; other animals, supposed to be unknown to the upper world, those hollows themselves produced."

When what we should term the historical age emerged from the twilight of tradition, the *Ana* were already established in different communities, and had attained to a degree of civilization very analogous to that which the more advanced nations above the earth now enjoy. They were familiar with most of

our mechanical inventions, including the application of steam as well as gas. The communities were in fierce competition with each other. They had their rich and their poor; they had orators and conquerors; they made war either for a domain or an idea. Though the various States acknowledged various forms of government, free institutions were beginning to preponderate; popular assemblies increased in power; republics soon became general; the democracy to which the most enlightened European politicians look forward as the extreme goal of political advancement, and which still prevailed among other subterranean races, whom they despised as barbarians, the loftier family of Ana, to which belonged the tribe I was visiting, looked back to as one of the crude and ignorant experiments which belong to the infancy of political science. It was the age of envy and hate, of fierce passions, of constant social changes more or less violent, of strife between classes, of war between State and State. This phase of society lasted, however, for some ages, and was finally brought to a close, at least among the nobler and more intellectual populations, by the gradual discovery of the latent powers stored in the all-permeating fluid which they denominate "Vril."

According to the account I received from Zee, who, as an erudite professor in the College of Sages, had studied such matters more diligently than any other member of my host's family, this fluid is capable of being raised and disciplined into the mightiest agency over all forms of matter, animate or inanimate. It can destroy like the flash of lightning; yet, differently applied, it can replenish or invigorate life, heal, and preserve; and on it they chiefly rely for the cure of disease, or rather for enabling the physical organization to re-establish the due equilibrium of its natural powers, and thereby to cure itself. By this agency they rend way through the most solid substances, and open valleys for culture through the rocks of their subterranean wilderness. From it they extract the light which supplies their lamps, finding it steadier, softer, and healthier than the other inflammable materials they had formerly used.

But the effects of the alleged discovery of the means to direct the more terrible force of vril were chiefly remarkable in their influence upon social polity. As these effects became familiarly known and skilfully administered, war between the Vril-discoverers ceased, for they brought the art of destruction to such perfection as to annul all superiority in numbers, discipline, or military skill. The fire lodged in the hollow of a rod directed by the hand of a child could shatter the strongest fortress, or cleave its burning way from the van to the rear of an embattled host. If army met army, and both had command of this agency, it could be but to the annihilation of each. The age of war was therefore gone, but with the cessation of war other effects bearing upon the social state soon became apparent. Man was so completely at the mercy of man, each whom he encountered being able, if so willing, to slay him on the instant, that all notions of government by force gradually vanished from political systems and forms of law. It is only by force that vast communities, dispersed through great distances of space, can be kept together; but now there was no longer either the necessity of self-preservation or the pride of aggrandizement to make one State desire to preponderate in population over another.

The Vril-discoverers thus, in the course of a few generations, peacefully split into communities of moderate size. The tribe amongst which I had fallen was limited to twelve thousand families. Each tribe occupied a territory sufficient for all its wants, and at stated periods the surplus population departed to seek a realm of its own. There appeared no necessity for any arbitrary selection of these emigrants; there was always a sufficient number who volunteered to depart.

These subdivided States, petty if we regard either territory or population, all appertained to one vast general family. They spoke the same language, though the dialects might slightly differ. They intermarried; they maintained the same general laws and customs; and so important a bond between these several communities was the knowledge of vril and the practice of its agencies, that the word A-Vril was synonymous with civilization; and Vril-ya, signifying "The Civilized Na-

tions," was the common name by which the communities employing the uses of vril distinguished themselves from such of the Ana as were yet in a state of barbarism.

The government of the tribe of Vrilya I am treating of was apparently very complicated, really very simple. It was based upon a principle recognized in theory, though little carried out in practice, above ground,—namely, that the object of all systems of philosophical thought tends to the attainment of unity, or the ascent through all intervening labyrinths to the simplicity of a single first cause or principle. Thus in politics, even republican writers have agreed that a benevolent autocracy would insure the best administration, if there were any guarantees for its continuance, or against its gradual abuse of the powers accorded to it. This singular community elected therefore a single supreme magistrate styled "Tur;" he held his office nominally for life, but he could seldom be induced to retain it after the first approach of old age. There was indeed in this society nothing to induce any of its members to covet the cares of office. No honours, no insignia of higher rank were assigned to it. The supreme magistrate was not distinguished from the rest by superior habitation or revenue. On the other hand, the duties awarded to him were marvellously light and easy, requiring no preponderant degree of energy or intelligence. There being no apprehensions of war, there were no armies to maintain; being no government of force, there was no police to appoint and direct. What we call crime was utterly unknown to the Vrilya; and there were no courts of criminal justice. The rare instances of civil disputes were referred for arbitration to friends chosen by either party, or decided by the Council of Sages, which will be described later. There were no professional lawyers; and indeed their laws were but amicable conventions, for there was no power to enforce laws against an offender who carried in his staff the power to destroy his judges. There were customs and regulations to compliance with which, for several ages, the people had tacitly habituated themselves; or if in any instance an individual felt such compliance hard, he quitted the community and went elsewhere. There was, in

fact, quietly established amid this State much the same compact that is found in our private families, in which we virtually say to any independent grown-up member of the family whom we receive and entertain, "Stay or go, according as our habits and regulations suit or displease you." But though there were no laws such as we call laws, no race above ground is so law-observing. Obedience to the rule adopted by the community has become as much an instinct as if it were implanted by nature. Even in every household the head of it makes a regulation for its guidance, which is never resisted nor even cavilled at by those who belong to the family. They have a proverb, the pithiness of which is much lost in this paraphrase, "No happiness without order, no order without authority, no authority without unity." The mildness of all government among them, civil or domestic, may be signalized by their idiomatic expressions for such terms as illegal or forbidden,—namely, "It is requested not to do so-and-so." Poverty among the Ana is as unknown as crime; not that property is held in common, or that all are equals in the extent of their possessions or the size and luxury of their habitations: but there being no difference of rank or position between the grades of wealth or the choice of occupations, each pursues his own inclinations without creating envy or vying; some like a modest, some a more splendid kind of life; each makes himself happy in his own way. Owing to this absence of competition, and the limit placed on the population, it is difficult for a family to fall into distress; there are no hazardous speculations, no emulators striving for superior wealth and rank. No doubt, in each settlement all originally had the same proportions of land dealt out to them; but some, more adventurous than others, had extended their possessions farther into the bordering wilds, or had improved into richer fertility the produce of their fields, or entered into commerce or trade. Thus, necessarily, some had grown richer than others, but none had become absolutely poor, or wanting anything which their tastes desired. If they did so, it was always in their power to migrate, or at the worst to apply, without shame and with certainty of aid, to the rich; for all

the members of the community considered themselves as brothers of one affectionate and united family. More upon this head will be treated of incidentally as my narrative proceeds.

The chief care of the supreme magistrate was to communicate with certain active departments charged with the administration of special details. The most important and essential of such details was that connected with the due provision of light. Of this department my host, Aph-Lin, was the chief. Another department, which might be called the foreign, communicated with the neighbouring kindred States, principally for the purpose of ascertaining all new inventions; and to a third department, all such inventions and improvements in machinery were committed for trial. Connected with this department was the College of Sages,—a college especially favoured by such of the Ana as were widowed and childless, and by the young unmarried females, amongst whom Zee was the most active, and, if what we call renown or distinction was a thing acknowledged by this people (which I shall later show it is not), among the most renowned or distinguished. It is by the female Professors of this College that those studies which are deemed of least use in practical life—as purely speculative philosophy, the history of remote periods, and such sciences as entomology, conchology, etc.—are the more diligently cultivated. Zee, whose mind, active as Aristotle's, equally embraced the largest domains and the minutest details of thought, had written two volumes on the parasite insect that dwells amid the hairs of a tiger's¹ paw, which work was considered the best authority on that interesting subject. But the researches of the sages are not confined to such subtle or elegant studies. They comprise various others more impor-

¹ The animal here referred to has many points of difference from the tiger of the upper world. It is larger, and with a broader paw, and still more receding frontal. It haunts the sides of lakes and pools, and feeds principally on fishes, though it does not object to any terrestrial animal of inferior strength that comes in its way. It is becoming very scarce even in the wild districts, where it is devoured by gigantic reptiles. I apprehend that it clearly belongs to the tiger species, since the parasite animalcule found in its paw, like that found in the Asiatic tiger's, is a miniature image of itself.

tant, and especially the properties of *vril*, to the perception of which their finer nervous organization renders the female Professors eminently keen. It is out of this college that the *Tur*, or chief magistrate, selects Councillors, limited to three, in the rare instances in which novelty of event or circumstance perplexes his own judgment.

There are a few other departments of minor consequence, but all are carried on so noiselessly and quietly that the evidence of a government seems to vanish altogether, and social order to be as regular and unobtrusive as if it were a law of nature. Machinery is employed to an inconceivable extent in all the operations of labour within and without doors, and it is the unceasing object of the department charged with its administration to extend its efficiency. There is no class of labourers or servants, but all who are required to assist or control the machinery are found in the children, from the time they leave the care of their mothers to the marriageable age, which they place at sixteen for the *Gy-ei* (the females), twenty for the *Ana* (the males). These children are formed into bands and sections under their own chiefs, each following the pursuits in which he is most pleased, or for which he feels himself most fitted. Some take to handicrafts, some to agriculture, some to household work, and some to the only services of danger to which the population is exposed; for the sole perils that threaten this tribe are, first, from those occasional convulsions within the earth, to foresee and guard against which tasks their utmost ingenuity,—irruptions of fire and water, the storms of subterranean winds and escaping gases. At the borders of the domain, and at all places where such peril might be apprehended, vigilant inspectors are stationed with telegraphic communication to the hall in which chosen sages take it by turns to hold perpetual sittings. These inspectors are always selected from the elder boys approaching the age of puberty, and on the principle that at that age observation is more acute and the physical forces more alert than at any other. The second service of danger, less grave, is in the destruction of all creatures hostile to the life, or the culture, or even the comfort, of the *Ana*. Of these

the most formidable are the vast reptiles, of some of which antediluvian relics are preserved in our museums, and certain gigantic winged creatures, half bird, half reptile. These, together with lesser wild animals, corresponding to our tigers or venomous serpents, it is left to the younger children to hunt and destroy; because, according to the Ana, here ruthlessness is wanted, and the younger a child the more ruthlessly he will destroy. There is another class of animals in the destruction of which discrimination is to be used, and against which children of intermediate age are appointed,—animals that do not threaten the life of man, but ravage the produce of his labour, —varieties of the elk and deer species, and a smaller creature much akin to our rabbit, though infinitely more destructive to crops, and much more cunning in its mode of depredation. It is the first object of these appointed infants to tame the more intelligent of such animals into respect for enclosures signalized by conspicuous landmarks, as dogs are taught to respect a larder, or even to guard the master's property. It is only where such creatures are found untamable to this extent that they are destroyed. Life is never taken away for food or for sport, and never spared where untamably inimical to the Ana. Concomitantly with these bodily services and tasks, the mental education of the children goes on till boyhood ceases. It is the general custom, then, to pass through a course of instruction at the College of Sages, in which, besides more general studies, the pupil receives special lessons in such vocation or direction of intellect as he himself selects. Some, however, prefer to pass this period of probation in travel, or to emigrate, or to settle down at once into rural or commercial pursuits. No force is put upon individual inclination.

CHAPTER X.

THE word Ana (pronounced broadly *Arna*) corresponds with our plural *men*; An (pronounced *Arn*), the singular, with *man*. The word for woman is Gy (pronounced hard, as in Guy); it forms itself into Gy-ei for the plural, but the G becomes soft in the plural, like Jy-ei. They have a proverb to the effect that this difference in pronunciation is symbolical, for that the female sex is soft collectively, but hard to deal with in the individual. The Gy-ei are in the fullest enjoyment of all the rights of equality with males, for which certain philosophers above ground contend.

In childhood they perform the offices of work and labour impartially with boys; and, indeed, in the earlier age appropriated to the destruction of animals irreclaimably hostile, the girls are frequently preferred, as being by constitution more ruthless under the influence of fear or hate. In the interval between infancy and the marriageable age familiar intercourse between the sexes is suspended. At the marriageable age it is renewed, never with worse consequences than those which attend upon marriage. All arts and vocations allotted to the one sex are open to the other, and the Gy-ei arrogate to themselves a superiority in all those abstruse and mystical branches of reasoning, for which they say the Ana are unfitted by a duller sobriety of understanding, or the routine of their matter-of-fact occupations, just as young ladies in our own world constitute themselves authorities in the subtlest points of theological doctrine, for which few men, actively engaged in worldly business, have sufficient learning or refinement of intellect. Whether owing to early training in gymnastic exercises, or to their constitutional organization, the Gy-ei are usually superior to the Ana in physical strength (an important element in the consideration and maintenance of female rights). They attain to loftier stature, and amid

their rounder proportions are embedded sinews and muscles as hardy as those of the other sex. Indeed they assert that, according to the original laws of nature, females were intended to be larger than males, and maintain this dogma by reference to the earliest formations of life in insects, and in the most ancient family of the vertebrata,—namely, fishes,—in both of which the females are generally large enough to make a meal of their consorts if they so desire. Above all, the Gy-ei have a readier and more concentrated power over that mysterious fluid or agency which contains the element of destruction, with a larger portion of that sagacity which comprehends dissimulation. Thus they can not only defend themselves against all aggressions from the males, but could, at any moment when he least suspected his danger, terminate the existence of an offending spouse. To the credit of the Gy-ei no instance of their abuse of this awful superiority in the art of destruction is on record for several ages. The last that occurred in the community I speak of appears (according to their chronology) to have been about two thousand years ago. A Gy, then in a fit of jealousy, slew her husband; and this abominable act inspired such terror among the males that they emigrated in a body and left all the Gy-ei to themselves. The history runs that the widowed Gy-ei, thus reduced to despair, fell upon the murderess when in her sleep (and therefore unarmed), and killed her, and then entered into a solemn obligation amongst themselves to abrogate forever the exercise of their extreme conjugal powers, and to inculcate the same obligation for ever and ever on their female children. By this conciliatory process, a deputation despatched to the fugitive consorts succeeded in persuading many to return, but those who did return were mostly the elder ones. The younger, either from too craven a doubt of their consorts, or too high an estimate of their own merits, rejected all overtures, and, remaining in other communities, were caught up there by other mates, with whom perhaps they were no better off. But the loss of so large a portion of the male youth operated as a salutary warning on the Gy-ei, and confirmed them in the pious resolution to which they had pledged themselves. In-

deed it is now popularly considered that, by long hereditary disuse, the Gy-ei have lost both the aggressive and the defensive superiority over the Ana which they once possessed, just as in the inferior animals above the earth many peculiarities in their original formation, intended by nature for their protection, gradually fade or become inoperative when not needed under altered circumstances. I should be sorry, however, for any An who induced a Gy to make the experiment whether he or she were the stronger.

From the incident I have narrated, the Ana date certain alterations in the marriage customs, tending, perhaps, somewhat to the advantage of the male. They now bind themselves in wedlock only for three years; at the end of each third year either male or female can divorce the other and is free to marry again. At the end of ten years the An has the privilege of taking a second wife, allowing the first to retire if she so please. These regulations are for the most part a dead letter; divorces and polygamy are extremely rare, and the marriage state now seems singularly happy and serene among this astonishing people,—the Gy-ei, notwithstanding their boastful superiority in physical strength and intellectual abilities, being much curbed into gentle manners by the dread of separation or of a second wife, and the Ana being very much the creatures of custom, and not, except under great aggravation, liking to exchange for hazardous novelties faces and manners to which they are reconciled by habit. But there is one privilege the Gy-ei carefully retain, and the desire for which perhaps forms the secret motive of most lady asserters of woman rights above ground. They claim the privilege, here usurped by men, of proclaiming their love and urging their suit,—in other words, of being the wooing party rather than the wooed. Such a phenomenon as an old maid does not exist among the Gy-ei. Indeed it is very seldom that a Gy does not secure any An upon whom she sets her heart, if his affections be not strongly engaged elsewhere. However coy, reluctant, and prudish the male she courts may prove at first, yet her perseverance, her ardour, her persuasive powers, her command over the mystic agencies of vril,

are pretty sure to run down his neck into what we call "the fatal noose." Their argument for the reversal of that relationship of the sexes which the blind tyranny of man has established on the surface of the earth, appears cogent, and is advanced with a frankness which might well be commended to impartial consideration. They say, that of the two the female is by nature of a more loving disposition than the male; that love occupies a larger space in her thoughts, and is more essential to her happiness, and that therefore she ought to be the wooing party; that otherwise the male is a shy and dubitant creature, that he has often a selfish predilection for the single state, that he often pretends to misunderstand tender glances and delicate hints,—that, in short, he must be resolutely pursued and captured. They add, moreover, that unless the Gy can secure the An of her choice, and one whom she would not select out of the whole world becomes her mate, she is not only less happy than she otherwise would be, but she is not so good a being, that her qualities of heart are not sufficiently developed; whereas the An is a creature that less lastingly concentrates his affections on one object; that if he cannot get the Gy whom he prefers he easily reconciles himself to another Gy; and, finally, that at the worst, if he is loved and taken care of, it is less necessary to the welfare of his existence that he should love as well as be loved; he grows contented with his creature comforts, and the many occupations of thought which he creates for himself.

Whatever may be said as to this reasoning, the system works well for the male; for being thus sure that he is truly and ardently loved, and that the more coy and reluctant he shows himself, the more the determination to secure him increases, he generally contrives to make his consent dependent on such conditions as he thinks the best calculated to insure, if not a blissful, at least a peaceful life. Each individual An has his own hobbies, his own ways, his own predilections, and, whatever they may be, he demands a promise of full and unrestrained concession to them. This, in the pursuit of her object, the Gy readily promises; and as the characteristic of this extraordinary people is an implicit veneration for truth,

and her word once given is never broken even by the giddiest Gy, the conditions stipulated for are religiously observed. In fact, notwithstanding all their abstract rights and powers, the Gy-ei are the most amiable, conciliatory, and submissive wives I have ever seen even in the happiest households above ground. It is an aphorism among them that "where a Gy loves it is her pleasure to obey." It will be observed that in the relationship of the sexes I have spoken only of marriage, for such is the moral perfection to which this community has attained, that any illicit connection is as little possible amongst them as it would be to a couple of linnets during the time they agreed to live in pairs.

CHAPTER XI.

NOTHING had more perplexed me in seeking to reconcile my sense to the existence of regions extending below the surface of the earth, and habitable by beings, if dissimilar from, still, in all material points of organism, akin to those in the upper world, than the contradiction thus presented to the doctrine in which, I believe, most geologists and philosophers concur,—namely, that though with us the sun is the great source of heat, yet the deeper we go beneath the crust of the earth, the greater is the increasing heat, being, it is said, found in the ratio of a degree for every foot, commencing from fifty feet below the surface. But though the domains of the tribe I speak of were, on the higher ground, so comparatively near to the surface that I could account for a temperature, therein, suitable to organic life, yet even the ravines and valleys of that realm were much less hot than philosophers would deem possible at such a depth,—certainly not warmer than the south of France, or at least of Italy. And according to all the accounts I received, vast tracts immeasurably deeper beneath the surface, and in which one might have

thought only salamanders could exist, were inhabited by innumerable races organized like ourselves. I cannot pretend in any way to account for a fact which is so at variance with the recognized laws of science, nor could Zee much help me towards a solution of it. She did but conjecture that sufficient allowance had not been made by our philosophers for the extreme porousness of the interior earth, the vastness of its cavities and irregularities, which served to create free currents of air and frequent winds, and for the various modes in which heat is evaporated and thrown off. She allowed, however, that there was a depth at which the heat was deemed to be intolerable to such organized life as was known to the experience of the Vrilya, though their philosophers believed that even in such places life of some kind, life sentient, life intellectual, would be found abundant and thriving, could the philosophers penetrate to it. "Wherever the All-Good builds," said she, "there, be sure, He places inhabitants. He loves not empty dwellings." She added, however, that many changes in temperature and climate had been effected by the skill of the Vrilya, and that the agency of vril had been successfully employed in such changes. She described a subtle and life-giving medium called Lai, which I suspect to be identical with the ethereal oxygen of Dr. Lewins, wherein work all the correlative forces united under the name of vril; and contended that wherever this medium could be expanded, as it were, sufficiently for the various agencies of vril to have ample play, a temperature congenial to the highest forms of life could be secured. She said also that it was the belief of their naturalists that flowers and vegetation had been produced originally (whether developed from seeds borne from the surface of the earth in the earlier convulsions of nature, or imported by the tribes that first sought refuge in cavernous hollows) through the operations of the light constantly brought to bear on them, and the gradual improvement in culture. She said also, that since the vril light had superseded all other light-giving bodies, the colours of flower and foliage had become more brilliant, and vegetation had acquired larger growth.

Leaving these matters to the consideration of those better competent to deal with them, I must now devote a few pages to the very interesting questions connected with the language of the Vrilya.

CHAPTER XII.

THE language of the Vrilya is peculiarly interesting, because it seems to me to exhibit with great clearness the traces of the three main transitions through which language passes in attaining to perfection of form.

One of the most illustrious of recent philologists, Max Müller, in arguing for the analogy between the strata of language and the strata of the earth, lays down this absolute dogma:—

“No language can, by any possibility, be inflectional without having passed through the agglutinative and isolating stratum. No language can be agglutinative without clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum of isolation.”¹

Taking then the Chinese language as the best existing type of the original isolating stratum, “as the faithful photograph of man in his leading-strings trying the muscles of his mind, groping his way, and so delighted with his first successful grasps that he repeats them again and again,”²—we have, in the language of the Vrilya, still “clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum,” the evidences of the original isolation. It abounds in monosyllables, which are the foundations of the language. The transition into the agglutinative form marks an epoch that must have gradually extended through ages, the written literature of which has only survived in a few fragments of symbolical mythology and certain pithy sentences which have passed into popular proverbs. With the extant literature of the Vrilya the inflectional stratum commences. No doubt at that time there must have operated

¹ On the Stratification of Language, p. 20.

² Max Müller, Stratification of Language, p. 13.

concurrent causes, in the fusion of races by some dominant people, and the rise of some great literary phenomena by which the form of language became arrested and fixed. As the inflectional stage prevailed over the agglutinative, it is surprising to see how much more boldly the original roots of the language project from the surface that conceals them. In the old fragments and proverbs of the preceding stage the monosyllables which compose those roots vanish amidst words of enormous length, comprehending whole sentences from which no one part can be disentangled from the other and employed separately. But when the inflectional form of language became so far advanced as to have its scholars and grammarians, they seem to have united in extirpating all such polysynthetical or polysyllabic monsters, as devouring invaders of the aboriginal forms. Words beyond three syllables became proscribed as barbarous, and in proportion as the language grew thus simplified it increased in strength, in dignity, and in sweetness. Though now very compressed in sound, it gains in clearness by that compression. By a single letter, according to its position, they contrive to express all that with civilized nations in our upper world it takes the waste, sometimes of syllables, sometimes of sentences, to express. Let me here cite one or two instances: An (which I will translate man), Ana (men); the letter S is with them a letter implying multitude, according to where it is placed; Sana means mankind; Ansa, a multitude of men. The prefix of certain letters in their alphabet invariably denotes compound significations. For instance, Gl (which with them is a single letter, as Th is a single letter with the Greeks) at the commencement of a word infers an assemblage or union of things, sometimes kindred, sometimes dissimilar,—as Oon, a house; Gloon, a town (that is, an assemblage of houses). Ata is sorrow; Glata, a public calamity. Aur-an is the health or well-being of a man; Glauran, the well-being of the State, the good of the community; and a word constantly in their mouths is A-glauran, which denotes their political creed,—namely, that “the first principle of a community is the good of all.” Aub is invention; Sila, a tone in music. Glaubsila,

as uniting the ideas of invention and of musical intonation, is the classical word for poetry,—abbreviated in ordinary conversation to Glaubs. Na, which with them is, like Gl, but a single letter, always, when an initial, implies something antagonistic to life or joy or comfort, resembling in this the Aryan root Nak, expressive of perishing or destruction. Nax is darkness; Narl, death; Naria, sin or evil; Nas—an uttermost condition of sin and evil,—corruption. In writing, they deem it irreverent to express the Supreme Being by any special name. He is symbolized by what may be termed the hieroglyphic of a pyramid, Δ. In prayer they address Him by a name which they deem too sacred to confide to a stranger, and I know it not. In conversation they generally use a periphrastic epithet, such as the All-Good. The letter V, symbolical of the inverted pyramid, where it is an initial, nearly always denotes excellence or power; as Vril, of which I have said so much; Veed, an immortal spirit; Veedya, immortality. Koom, pronounced like the Welsh Cwm, denotes something of hollowness. Koom itself is a profound hollow, metaphorically a cavern; Koom-in, a hole; Zi-koom, a valley; Koom-zi, vacancy or void; Bodh-koom, ignorance (literally, knowledge-void). Koom-Posh is their name for the government of the many, or the ascendancy of the most ignorant or hollow. Posh is an almost untranslatable idiom implying, as the reader will see later, contempt. The closest rendering I can give to it is our slang term “bosh;” and thus Koom-Posh may be loosely rendered “Hollow-Bosh.” But when Democracy or Koom-Posh degenerates from popular ignorance into that popular passion or ferocity which precedes its decease, as (to cite illustrations from the upper world) during the French Reign of Terror, or for the fifty years of the Roman Republic preceding the ascendancy of Augustus, their name for that state of things is Glek-Nas. Ek is strife; Glek, the universal strife; Nas, as I before said, is corruption or rot,—thus Glek-Nas may be construed “the universal strife-rot.” Their compounds are very expressive; thus, Bodh being knowledge, and Too, a participle that implies the action of cautiously approaching, Too-bodh is their word for Philosophy. Pah is a

contemptuous exclamation analogous to our idiom, "stuff and nonsense;" Pah-bodh (literally, stuff-and-nonsense-knowledge) is their term for futile or false philosophy, and is applied to a species of metaphysical or speculative ratiocination formerly in vogue, which consisted in making inquiries that could not be answered, and were not worth making,—such, for instance, as, "Why does an An have five toes to his feet instead of four or six?" "Did the first An, created by the All-Good, have the same number of toes as his descendants?" "In the form by which an An will be recognized by his friends in the future state of being, will he retain any toes at all, and, if so, will they be material toes or spiritual toes?" I take these illustrations of Pah-bodh, not in irony or jest, but because the very inquiries I name formed the subject of controversy by the latest cultivators of that "science" four thousand years ago.

In the declension of nouns I was informed that anciently there were eight cases (one more than in the Sanskrit Grammar); but the effect of time has been to reduce these cases, and multiply, instead of these varying terminations, explanatory prepositions. At present, in the Grammar submitted to my study, there were four cases to nouns, three having varying terminations, and the fourth a differing prefix.

SINGULAR.			PLURAL.		
<i>Nom.</i>	An,	Man.	<i>Nom.</i>	Ana,	Men.
<i>Dat.</i>	Ano,	to Man.	<i>Dat.</i>	Anoi,	to Men.
<i>Ac.</i>	Anam,	Man.	<i>Ac.</i>	Ananda,	Men.
<i>Voc.</i>	Hil-An,	O Man.	<i>Voc.</i>	Hil-Ananda,	O Men.

In the elder inflectional literature the dual form existed; it has long been obsolete.

The genitive case with them is also obsolete; the dative supplies its place: they say the house *to* a man, instead of the house *of* a man. When used (sometimes in poetry), the genitive in the termination is the same as the nominative; so is the ablative, the preposition that marks it being a prefix or suffix at option, and generally decided by ear, according to the sound of the noun. It will be observed that the prefix Hil marks the vocative case. It is always retained in addressing

another, except in the most intimate domestic relations; its omission would be considered rude: just as in our old forms of speech in addressing a king it would have been deemed disrespectful to say "King," and reverential to say "O King." In fact, as they have no titles of honour, the vocative adjuration supplies the place of a title, and is given impartially to all. The prefix Hil enters into the composition of words that imply distant communications, as Hil-ya, to travel.

In the conjugation of their verbs, which is much too lengthy a subject to enter on here, the auxiliary verb Ya, "to go," which plays so considerable a part in the Sanskrit, appears and performs a kindred office, as if it were a radical in some language from which both had descended. But another auxiliary of opposite signification also accompanies it and shares its labours,—namely, Zi, to stay or repose. Thus Ya enters into the future tense, and Zi in the preterite of all verbs requiring auxiliaries. Yam, I go, Yiam, I may go, Yani-ya, I shall go (literally, I go to go), Zampoo-yan, I have gone (literally, I rest from gone). Ya, as a termination, implies by analogy progress, movement, efflorescence. Zi, as a terminal, denotes fixity, sometimes in a good sense, sometimes in a bad, according to the word with which it is coupled. Iva-zi, eternal goodness; Nan-zi, eternal evil. Poo (from) enters as a prefix to words that denote repugnance, or things from which we ought to be averse: Poo-pra, disgust; Poo-naria, falsehood, the vilest kind of evil. Poosh, or Posh, I have already confessed to be untranslatable literally. It is an expression of contempt not unmixed with pity. This radical seems to have originated from inherent sympathy between the labial effort and the sentiment that impelled it, Poo being an utterance in which the breath is exploded from the lips with more or less vehemence. On the other hand, Z, when an initial, is with them a sound in which the breath is sucked inward, and thus Zu, pronounced Zoo (which in their language is one letter), is the ordinary prefix to words that signify something that attracts, pleases, touches the heart,—as Zummer, lover; Zutze, love; Zuzulia, delight. This indrawn sound of Z seems indeed naturally appropriate to fondness.

Thus, even in our language, mothers say to their babies, in defiance of grammar, "Zoo darling;" and I have heard a learned professor at Boston call his wife (he had been only married a month) "Zoo little pet."

I cannot quit this subject, however, without observing by what slight changes in the dialects favoured by different tribes of the same race, the original signification and beauty of sounds may become confused and deformed. Zee told me with much indignation that Zümmer (lover), which, in the way she uttered it, seemed slowly taken down to the very depths of her heart, was, in some not very distant communities of the Vrilya, vitiated into the half-hissing, half-nasal, wholly disagreeable, sound of Süber. I thought to myself it only wanted the introduction of *n* before *u* to render it into an English word significant of the last quality an amorous Gy would desire in her Zummer.

I will but mention another peculiarity in this language which gives equal force and brevity to its forms of expressions.

A is with them, as with us, the first letter of the alphabet, and is often used as a prefix word by itself to convey a complex idea of sovereignty or chiefdom, or presiding principle. For instance, Iva is goodness; Diva, goodness and happiness united; A-Diva is unerring and absolute truth. I have already noticed the value of A in A-glauran; so, in vril (to whose properties they trace their present state of civilization), A-vril, denotes, as I have said, civilization itself.

The philologist will have seen from the above how much the language of the Vrilya is akin to the Aryan or Indo-Germanic; but, like all languages, it contains words and forms in which transfers from very opposite sources of speech have been taken. The very title of Tur, which they give to their supreme magistrate, indicates theft from a tongue akin to the Turanian. They say themselves that this is a foreign word borrowed from a title which their historical records show to have been borne by the chief of a nation with whom the ancestors of the Vrilya were, in very remote periods, on friendly terms, but which has long become extinct; and they

say that when, after the discovery of vril, they remodelled their political institutions, they expressly adopted a title taken from an extinct race and a dead language for that of their chief magistrate, in order to avoid all titles for that office with which they had previous associations.

Should life be spared to me, I may collect into systematic form such knowledge as I acquired of this language during my sojourn amongst the Vrilya. But what I have already said will perhaps suffice to show to genuine philological students that a language which, preserving so many of the roots in the aboriginal form, and clearing from the immediate, but transitory, polysynthetical stage so many rude incumbrances, has attained to such a union of simplicity and compass in its final inflectional forms, must have been the gradual work of countless ages and many varieties of mind; that it contains the evidence of fusion between congenial races, and necessitated, in arriving at the shape of which I have given examples, the continuous culture of a highly thoughtful people.

That, nevertheless, the literature which belongs to this language is a literature of the past; that the present felicitous state of society at which the Ana have attained forbids the progressive cultivation of literature, especially in the two main divisions of fiction and history,—I shall have occasion to show later.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS people have a religion, and, whatever may be said against it, at least it has these strange peculiarities: firstly, that they all believe in the creed they profess; secondly, that they all practise the precepts which the creed inculcates. They unite in the worship of the one divine Creator and Sustainer of the universe. They believe that it is one of the properties of the all-permeating agency of vril to transmit to the well-spring of life and intelligence every thought that a

living creature can conceive; and though they do not contend that the idea of a Deity is innate, yet they say that the An (man) is the only creature, so far as their observation of nature extends, to whom *the capacity of conceiving that idea*, with all the trains of thought which open out from it, is vouchsafed. They hold that this capacity is a privilege that cannot have been given in vain, and hence that prayer and thanksgiving are acceptable to the divine Creator, and necessary to the complete development of the human creature. They offer their devotions both in private and public. Not being considered one of their species, I was not admitted into the building or temple in which the public worship is rendered; but I am informed that the service is exceedingly short, and unattended with any pomp of ceremony. It is a doctrine with the Vril-ya that earnest devotion or complete abstraction from the actual world cannot, with benefit to itself, be maintained long at a stretch by the human mind, especially in public, and that all attempts to do so either lead to fanaticism or to hypocrisy. When they pray in private, it is when they are alone or with their young children.

They say that in ancient times there was a great number of books written upon speculations as to the nature of the Deity, and upon the forms of belief or worship supposed to be most agreeable to Him; but these were found to lead to such heated and angry disputations as not only to shake the peace of the community and divide families before the most united, but in the course of discussing the attributes of the Deity, the existence of the Deity Himself became argued away, or, what was worse, became invested with the passions and infirmities of the human disputants. "For," said my host, "since a finite being like an An cannot possibly define the Infinite, so, when he endeavours to realize an idea of the Divinity, he only reduces the Divinity into an An like himself." During the later ages, therefore, all theological speculations, though not forbidden, have been so discouraged as to have fallen utterly into disuse.

The Vril-ya unite in a conviction of a future state, more felicitous and more perfect than the present. If they have

very vague notions of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, it is perhaps because they have no systems of rewards and punishments among themselves, for there are no crimes to punish, and their moral standard is so even that no An among them is, upon the whole, considered more virtuous than another. If one excels, perhaps, in one virtue, another equally excels in some other virtue; if one has his prevalent fault or infirmity, so also another has his. In fact, in their extraordinary mode of life, there are so few temptations to wrong, that they are good (according to their notions of goodness) merely because they live. They have some fanciful notions upon the continuance of life, when once bestowed, even in the vegetable world, as the reader will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH, as I have said, the Vril-ya discourage all speculations on the nature of the Supreme Being, they appear to concur in a belief by which they think to solve that great problem of the existence of evil which has so perplexed the philosophy of the upper world. They hold that wherever He has once given life, with the perceptions of that life, however faint it be, as in a plant, the life is never destroyed; it passes into new and improved forms, though not in this planet (differing therein from the ordinary doctrine of metempsychosis), and that the living thing retains the sense of identity, so that it connects its past life with its future, and is *conscious* of its progressive improvement in the scale of joy. For they say that, without this assumption, they cannot, according to the lights of human reason vouchsafed to them, discover the perfect justice which must be a constituent quality of the All-Wise and the All-Good. Injustice, they say, can only emanate from three causes: want of wisdom to perceive what is just, want of benevolence to desire, want of power to fulfil it; and that each of these three wants is incompatible in the All-Wise,

the All-Good, the All-Powerful; but that while, even in this life, the wisdom, the benevolence, and the power of the Supreme Being are sufficiently apparent to compel our recognition, the justice necessarily resulting from those attributes absolutely requires another life, not for man only, but for every living thing of the inferior orders; that, alike in the animal and the vegetable world, we see one individual rendered, by circumstances beyond its control, exceedingly wretched compared to its neighbours,—one only exists as the prey of another,—even a plant suffers from disease till it perishes prematurely, while the plant next to it rejoices in its vitality and lives out its happy life free from a pang; that it is an erroneous analogy from human infirmities to reply by saying that the Supreme Being only acts by general laws, thereby making his own secondary causes so potent as to mar the essential kindness of the First Cause; and a still meaner and more ignorant conception of the All-Good to dismiss with a brief contempt all consideration of justice for the myriad forms into which He has infused life, and assume that justice is only due to the single product of the An. There is no small and no great in the eyes of the divine Life-Giver. But once grant that nothing, however humble, which feels that it lives and suffers, can perish through the series of ages; that all its suffering here, if continuous from the moment of its birth to that of its transfer to another form of being, would be more brief compared with eternity than the cry of the newborn is compared to the whole life of a man; and once suppose that this living thing retains its sense of identity when so transferred (for without that sense it could be aware of no future being),—then, though indeed the fulfilment of divine justice is removed from the scope of our ken, yet we have a right to assume it to be uniform and universal, and not varying and partial, as it would be if acting only upon general secondary laws; because such perfect justice flows of necessity from perfectness of knowledge to conceive, perfectness of love to will, and perfectness of power to complete it.

However fantastic this belief of the Vrilya may be, it tends perhaps to confirm politically the systems of government

which, admitting differing degrees of wealth, yet establishes perfect equality in rank, exquisite mildness in all relations and intercourse, and tenderness to all created things which the good of the community does not require them to destroy. And though their notion of compensation to a tortured insect or a cankered flower may seem to some of us a very wild crotchet, yet, at least, it is not a mischievous one; and it may furnish matter for no unpleasing reflection to think that within the abysses of earth, never lit by a ray from the material heavens, there should have penetrated so luminous a conviction of the ineffable goodness of the Creator,—so fixed an idea that the general laws by which He acts cannot admit of any partial injustice or evil, and therefore cannot be comprehended without reference to their action over all space and throughout all time. And since, as I shall have occasion to observe later, the intellectual conditions and social systems of this subterranean race comprise and harmonize great, and apparently antagonistic, varieties in philosophical doctrine and speculation which have from time to time been started, discussed, dismissed, and have re-appeared amongst thinkers or dreamers in the upper world,—so I may perhaps appropriately conclude this reference to the belief of the Vrilya—that self-conscious or sentient life once given is indestructible among inferior creatures as well as in man—by an eloquent passage from the work of that eminent zoologist, Louis Agassiz, which I have only just met with, many years after I had committed to paper those recollections of the life of the Vrilya which I now reduce into something like arrangement and form:—

“The relations which individual animals bear to one another are of such a character that they ought long ago to have been considered as sufficient proof that no organized being could ever have been called into existence by other agency than by the direct intervention of a reflective mind. This argues strongly in favour of the existence in every animal of an immaterial principle similar to that which by its excellence and superior endowments places man so much above animals; yet the principle unquestionably exists, and whether it be called sense, reason, or instinct, it presents in the whole range of

organized beings a series of phenomena closely linked together, and upon it are based not only the higher manifestations of the mind, but the very permanence of the specific differences which characterize every organism. Most of the arguments in favour of the immortality of man apply equally to the permanency of this principle in other living beings. May I not add that a future life in which man would be deprived of that great source of enjoyment and intellectual and moral improvement which results from the contemplation of the harmonies of an organic world would involve a lamentable loss? And may we not look to a spiritual concert of the combined worlds and *all* their inhabitants in the presence of their Creator as the highest conception of paradise?"¹

CHAPTER XV.

KIND to me as I found all in this household, the young daughter of my host was the most considerate and thoughtful in her kindness. At her suggestion I laid aside the habiliments in which I had descended from the upper earth, and adopted the dress of the Vrilya, with the exception of the artful wings which served them, when on foot, as a graceful mantle. But as many of the Vrilya, when occupied in urban pursuits, did not wear these wings, this exception created no marked difference between myself and the race among which I sojourned, and I was thus enabled to visit the town without exciting unpleasant curiosity. Out of the household no one suspected that I had come from the upper world, and I was but regarded as one of some inferior and barbarous tribe whom Aph-Lin entertained as a guest.

The city was large in proportion to the territory round it, which was of no greater extent than many an English or Hungarian nobleman's estate; but the whole of it, to the verge of the rocks which constituted its boundary, was cultivated to the nicest degree, except where certain allotments of mountain and pasture were humanely left free to the suste-

¹ Essay on Classification, sect. xvii. pp. 97-99.

nance of the harmless animals they had tamed, though not for domestic use. So great is their kindness towards these humbler creatures, that a sum is devoted from the public treasury for the purpose of deporting them to other Vril-ya communities willing to receive them (chiefly new colonies), whenever they become too numerous for the pastures allotted to them in their native place. They do not, however, multiply to an extent comparable to the ratio at which, with us, animals bred for slaughter increase. It seems a law of nature that animals not useful to man gradually recede from the domains he occupies, or even become extinct. It is an old custom of the various sovereign States amidst which the race of the Vril-ya are distributed, to leave between each State a neutral and uncultivated border-land. In the instance of the community I speak of, this tract, being a ridge of savage rocks, was impassable by foot, but was easily surmounted, whether by the wings of the inhabitants or the air-boats, of which I shall speak hereafter. Roads through it were also cut for the transit of vehicles impelled by vril. These intercommunicating tracts were always kept lighted, and the expense thereof defrayed by a special tax, to which all the communities comprehended in the denomination of Vril-ya contribute in settled proportions. By these means a considerable commercial traffic with other States, both near and distant, was carried on. The surplus wealth of this special community was chiefly agricultural. The community was also eminent for skill in constructing implements connected with the arts of husbandry. In exchange for such merchandise it obtained articles more of luxury than necessity. There were few things imported on which they set a higher price than birds taught to pipe artful tunes in concert. These were brought from a great distance, and were marvellous for beauty of song and plumage. I understood that extraordinary care was taken by their breeders and teachers in selection, and that the species had wonderfully improved during the last few years. I saw no other pet animals among this community except some very amusing and sportive creatures of the Batrachian species, resembling frogs, but with very intelligent countenances, which

the children were fond of, and kept in their private gardens. They appear to have no animals akin to our dogs or horses, though that learned naturalist, Zee, informed me that such creatures had once existed in those parts, and might now be found in regions inhabited by other races than the Vrilya. She said that they had gradually disappeared from the more civilized world since the discovery of vril, and the results attending that discovery, had dispensed with their uses. Machinery and the invention of wings had superseded the horse as a beast of burden; and the dog was no longer wanted either for protection or the chase, as it had been when the ancestors of the Vrilya feared the aggressions of their own kind, or hunted the lesser animals for food. Indeed, however, so far as the horse was concerned, this region was so rocky that a horse could have been, there, of little use either for pastime or burden. The only creature they use for the latter purpose is a kind of large goat, which is much employed on farms. The nature of the surrounding soil in these districts may be said to have first suggested the invention of wings and air-boats. The largeness of space, in proportion to the rural territory occupied by the city, was occasioned by the custom of surrounding every house with a separate garden. The broad main street, in which Aph-Lin dwelt, expanded into a vast square, in which were placed the College of Sages and all the public offices,—a magnificent fountain of the luminous fluid which I call naphtha (I am ignorant of its real nature) in the centre. All these public edifices have a uniform character of massiveness and solidity. They reminded me of the architectural pictures of Martin. Along the upper stories of each ran a balcony, or rather a terraced garden, supported by columns, filled with flowering-plants, and tenanted by many kinds of tame birds. From the square branched several streets, all broad and brilliantly lighted, and ascending up the eminence on either side. In my excursions in the town I was never allowed to go alone; Aph-Lin or his daughter was my habitual companion. In this community the adult Gy is seen walking with any young An as familiarly as if there were no difference of sex.

The retail shops are not very numerous; the persons who attend on a customer are all children of various ages, and exceedingly intelligent and courteous, but without the least touch of importunity or cringing. The shopkeeper himself might or might not be visible; when visible, he seemed rarely employed on any matter connected with his professional business; and yet he had taken to that business from special liking to it, and quite independently of his general sources of fortune.

Some of the richest citizens in the community kept such shops. As I have before said, no difference of rank is recognizable, and therefore all occupations hold the same equal social status. An An, of whom I bought my sandals, was the brother of the Tur, or chief magistrate; and though his shop was not larger than that of any bootmaker in Bond Street or Broadway, he was said to be twice as rich as the Tur, who dwelt in a palace. No doubt, however, he had some country-seat.

The Ana of the community are, on the whole, an indolent set of beings after the active age of childhood. Whether by temperament or philosophy, they rank repose among the chief blessings of life. Indeed, when you take away from a human being the incentives to action which are found in cupidity or ambition, it seems to me no wonder that he rests quiet.

In their ordinary movements they prefer the use of their feet to that of their wings. But for their sports, or (to indulge in a bold misuse of terms) their public *promenades*, they employ the latter, also for the aerial dances I have described, as well as for visiting their country-places, which are mostly placed on lofty heights; and, when still young, they prefer their wings, for travel into the other regions of the Ana, to vehicular conveyances.

Those who accustom themselves to flight can fly, if less rapidly than some birds, yet from twenty-five to thirty miles an hour, and keep up that rate for five or six hours at a stretch. But the Ana generally, on reaching middle age, are not fond of rapid movements requiring violent exercise. Perhaps for this reason, as they hold a doctrine which our own

physicians will doubtless approve,—namely, that regular transpiration through the pores of the skin is essential to health,—they habitually use the sweating-baths to which we give the name of Turkish or Roman, succeeded by douches of perfumed waters. They have great faith in the salubrious virtue of certain perfumes.

It is their custom also, at stated but rare periods, perhaps four times a year when in health, to use a bath charged with vril.¹ They consider that this fluid, sparingly used, is a great sustainer of life; but used in excess, when in the normal state of health, rather tends to reaction and exhausted vitality. For nearly all their diseases, however, they resort to it as the chief assistant to nature in throwing off the complaint.

In their own way they are the most luxurious of people, but all their luxuries are innocent. They may be said to dwell in an atmosphere of music and fragrance. Every room has its mechanical contrivances for melodious sounds, usually tuned down to soft-murmured notes, which seem like sweet whispers from invisible spirits. They are too accustomed to these gentle sounds to find them a hindrance to conversation, nor, when alone, to reflection. But they have a notion that to breathe an air filled with continuous melody and perfume has necessarily an effect at once soothing and elevating upon the formation of character and the habits of thought. Though so temperate, and with total abstinence from other animal food than milk, and from all intoxicating drinks, they are delicate and dainty to an extreme in food and beverage; and in all their sports even the old exhibit a childlike gayety. Happiness is the end at which they aim, not as the excitement of a moment, but as the prevailing condition of the entire existence; and regard for the happiness of each other is evinced by the exquisite amenity of their manners.

Their conformation of skull has marked differences from

¹ I once tried the effect of the vril bath. It was very similar in its invigorating powers to that of the baths at Gastein, the virtues of which are ascribed by many physicians to electricity; but though similar, the effect of the vril bath was more lasting.

that of any known races in the upper world, though I cannot help thinking it a development, in the course of countless ages, of the Brachycephalic type of the Age of Stone in Lyell's "Elements of Geology," ch. X, p. 113, as compared with the Dolichocephalic type of the beginning of the Age of Iron, correspondent with that now so prevalent amongst us, and called the Celtic type. It has the same comparative massiveness of forehead, not receding like the Celtic, the same even roundness in the frontal organs; but it is far loftier in the apex, and far less pronounced in the hinder cranial hemisphere where phrenologists place the animal organs. To speak as a phrenologist, the cranium common to the Vrilya has the organs of weight, number, tune, form, order, causality, very largely developed; that of construction much more pronounced than that of ideality. Those which are called the moral organs, such as conscientiousness and benevolence, are amazingly full; amativeness and combativeness are both small; adhesiveness large; the organ of destructiveness (that is, of determined clearance of intervening obstacles) immense, but less than that of benevolence; and their philoprogenitiveness takes rather the character of compassion and tenderness to things that need aid or protection than of the animal love of offspring. I never met with one person deformed or misshapen. The beauty of their countenances is not only in symmetry of feature, but in a smoothness of surface, which continues without line or wrinkle to the extreme of old age, and a serene sweetness of expression, combined with that majesty which seems to come from consciousness of power and the freedom of all terror, physical or moral. It is that very sweetness, combined with that majesty, which inspired in a beholder like myself, accustomed to strive with the passions of mankind, a sentiment of humiliation, of awe, of dread. It is such an expression as a painter might give to a demi-god, a genius, an angel. The males of the Vrilya are entirely beardless; the Gy-ei sometimes, in old age, develop a small mustache.

I was surprised to find that the colour of their skin was not uniformly that which I had remarked in those individuals

whom I had first encountered,—some being much fairer, and even with blue eyes, and hair of a deep golden auburn, though still of complexions warmer or richer in tone than persons in the north of Europe.

I was told that this admixture of colouring arose from intermarriage with other and more distant tribes of the Vrilya, who, whether by the accident of climate or early distinction of race, were of fairer hues than the tribes of which this community formed one. It was considered that the dark-red skin showed the most ancient family of Ana; but they attached no sentiment of pride to that antiquity, and, on the contrary, believed their present excellence of breed came from frequent crossing with other families differing, yet akin; and they encourage such intermarriages, always provided that it be with the Vrilya nations. Nations which, not conforming their manners and institutions to those of the Vrilya, nor indeed held capable of acquiring the powers over the vril agencies which it had taken them generations to attain and transmit, were regarded with more disdain than citizens of New York regard the negroes.

I learned from Zee, who had more lore in all matters than any male with whom I was brought into familiar converse, that the superiority of the Vrilya was supposed to have originated in the intensity of their earlier struggles against obstacles in nature amidst the localities in which they had first settled. "Wherever," said Zee, moralizing, "wherever goes on that early process in the history of civilization by which life is made a struggle, in which the individual has to put forth all his powers to compete with his fellow, we invariably find this result,—namely, since in the competition a vast number must perish, nature selects for preservation only the strongest specimens. With our race, therefore, even before the discovery of vril, only the highest organizations were preserved; and there is among our ancient books a legend, once popularly believed, that we were driven from a region that seems to denote the world you come from, in order to perfect our condition and attain to the purest elimination of our species by the severity of the struggles our

forefathers underwent; and that, when our education shall become finally completed, we are destined to return to the upper world, and supplant all the inferior races now existing therein."

Aph-Lin and Zee often conversed with me in private upon the political and social conditions of that upper world, in which Zee so philosophically assumed that the inhabitants were to be exterminated one day or other by the advent of the Vrilya. They found in my accounts — in which I continued to do all I could (without launching into falsehoods so positive that they would have been easily detected by the shrewdness of my listeners) to present our powers and ourselves in the most flattering point of view — perpetual subjects of comparison between our most civilized populations and the meaner subterranean races which they considered hopelessly plunged in barbarism, and doomed to gradual if certain extinction. But they both agreed in desiring to conceal from their community all premature opening into the regions lighted by the sun; both were humane, and shrunk from the thought of annihilating so many millions of creatures; and the pictures I drew of our life, highly coloured as they were, saddened them. In vain I boasted of our great men, — poets, philosophers, orators, generals, — and defied the Vrilya to produce their equals. "Alas!" said Zee, her grand face softening into an angel-like compassion, "this predominance of the few over the many is the surest and most fatal sign of a race incorrigibly savage. See you not that the primary condition of mortal happiness consists in the extinction of that strife and competition between individuals, which, no matter what forms of government they adopt, render the many subordinate to the few, destroy real liberty to the individual, whatever may be the nominal liberty of the State, and annul that calm of existence, without which felicity, mental or bodily, cannot be attained? Our notion is, that the more we can assimilate life to the existence which our noblest ideas can conceive to be that of spirits on the other side of the grave, why, the more we approximate to a divine happiness here, and the more easily we glide into the conditions of being hereafter. For,

surely, all we can imagine of the life of gods, or of blessed immortals, supposes the absence of self-made cares and contentious passions, such as avarice and ambition. It seems to us that it must be a life of serene tranquillity, not indeed without active occupations to the intellectual or spiritual powers, but occupations, of whatsoever nature they be, congenial to the idiosyncrasies of each, not forced and repugnant,—a life gladdened by the untrammelled interchange of gentle affections, in which the moral atmosphere utterly kills hate and vengeance and strife and rivalry. Such is the political state to which all the tribes and families of the Vril-ya seek to attain, and towards that goal all our theories of government are shaped. You see how utterly opposed is such a progress to that of the uncivilized nations from which you come, and which aim at a systematic perpetuity of troubles and cares and warring passions, aggravated more and more as their progress storms its way onward. The most powerful of all the races in our world, beyond the pale of the Vril-ya, esteems itself the best governed of all political societies, and to have reached in that respect the extreme end at which political wisdom can arrive, so that the other nations should tend more or less to copy it. It has established, on its broadest base, the Koom-Posh,—namely, the government of the ignorant upon the principle of being the most numerous. It has placed the supreme bliss in the vying with each other in all things, so that the evil passions are never in repose,—vying for power, for wealth, for eminence of some kind; and in this rivalry it is horrible to hear the vituperation, the slanders, and calumnies which even the best and mildest among them heap on each other without remorse or shame."

"Some years ago," said Aph-Lin, "I visited this people, and their misery and degradation were the more appalling because they were always boasting of their felicity and grandeur as compared with the rest of their species; and there is no hope that this people, which evidently resembles your own, can improve, because all their notions tend to further deterioration. They desire to enlarge their dominion more and more, in direct antagonism to the truth that, beyond a very

limited range, it is impossible to secure to a community the happiness which belongs to a well-ordered family; and the more they mature a system by which a few individuals are heated and swollen to a size above the standard slenderness of the millions, the more they chuckle and exult, and cry out, 'See by what great exceptions to the common littleness of our race we prove the magnificent results of our system!'

"In fact," resumed Zee, "if the wisdom of human life be to approximate to the serene equality of immortals, there can be no more direct flying off into the opposite direction than a system which aims at carrying to the utmost the inequalities and turbulences of mortals. Nor do I see how, by any forms of religious belief, mortals, so acting, could fit themselves even to appreciate the joys of immortals to which they still expect to be transferred by the mere act of dying. On the contrary, minds accustomed to place happiness in things so much the reverse of godlike, would find the happiness of gods exceedingly dull, and would long to get back to a world in which they could quarrel with each other."

CHAPTER XVI.

I HAVE spoken so much of the Vril Staff that my reader may expect me to describe it. This I cannot do accurately, for I was never allowed to handle it for fear of some terrible accident occasioned by my ignorance of its use. It is hollow, and has in the handle several stops, keys, or springs by which its force can be altered, modified, or directed,—so that by one process it destroys, by another it heals; by one it can rend the rock, by another disperse the vapour; by one it affects bodies, by another it can exercise a certain influence over minds. It is usually carried in the convenient size of a walking-staff, but it has slides by which it can be lengthened or shortened at will. When used for special purposes, the upper part rests in the hollow of the palm, with the fore and

middle fingers protruded. I was assured, however, that its power was not equal in all, but proportioned to the amount of certain vril properties in the wearer, in affinity, or *rappport*, with the purposes to be effected. Some were more potent to destroy, others to heal, etc.; much also depended on the calm and steadiness of volition in the manipulator. They assert that the full exercise of vril power can only be acquired by constitutional temperament,—that is, by hereditarily transmitted organization,—and that a female infant of four years old belonging to the Vril-ya races can accomplish feats with the wand placed for the first time in her hand, which a life spent in its practice would not enable the strongest and most skilled mechanician born out of the pale of the Vril-ya to achieve. All these wands are not equally complicated; those intrusted to children are much simpler than those borne by sages of either sex, and constructed with a view to the special object in which the children are employed,—which, as I have before said, is among the youngest children the most destructive. In the wands of wives and mothers the correlative destroying force is usually abstracted, the healing power fully charged. I wish I could say more in detail of this singular conductor of the vril fluid, but its machinery is as exquisite as its effects are marvellous.

I should say, however, that this people have invented certain tubes by which the vril fluid can be conducted towards the object it is meant to destroy, throughout a distance almost indefinite; at least I put it modestly when I say from five to six hundred miles. And their mathematical science as applied to such purpose is so nicely accurate, that on the report of some observer in an air-boat, any member of the vril department can estimate unerringly the nature of intervening obstacles, the height to which the projectile instrument should be raised, and the extent to which it should be charged, so as to reduce to ashes, within a space of time too short for me to venture to specify it, a capital twice as vast as London.

Certainly these Ana are wonderful mechanicians,—wonderful for the adaptation of the inventive faculty to practical uses.

I went with my host and his daughter Zee over the great public museum, which occupies a wing in the College of Sages, and in which are hoarded, as curious specimens of the ignorant and blundering experiments of ancient times, many contrivances on which we pride ourselves as recent achievements. In one department, carelessly thrown aside as obsolete lumber, are tubes for destroying life by metallic balls and an inflammable powder, on the principle of our cannons and catapults, and even still more murderous than our latest improvements.

My host spoke of these with a smile of contempt, such as an artillery officer might bestow on the bows and arrows of the Chinese. In another department there were models of vehicles and vessels worked by steam, and of a balloon which might have been constructed by Montgolfier. "Such," said Zee, with an air of meditative wisdom,—"such were the feeble triflings with nature of our savage forefathers, ere they had even a glimmering perception of the properties of vril!"

This young Gy was a magnificent specimen of the muscular force to which the females of her country attain. Her features were beautiful, like those of all her race: never in the upper world have I seen a face so grand and so faultless; but her devotion to the severer studies had given to her countenance an expression of abstract thought which rendered it somewhat stern when in repose, and such sternness became formidable when observed in connection with her ample shoulders and lofty stature. She was tall even for a Gy, and I saw her lift up a cannon as easily as I could lift a pocket-pistol. Zee inspired me with a profound terror,—a terror which increased when we came into a department of the museum appropriated to models of contrivances worked by the agency of vril; for here, merely by a certain play of her vril staff, she herself standing at a distance, she put into movement large and weighty substances. She seemed to endow them with intelligence, and to make them comprehend and obey her command. She set complicated pieces of machinery into movement, arrested the movement or continued it, until, within an incredibly short time, various kinds of

raw material were reproduced as symmetrical works of art, complete and perfect. Whatever effect mesmerism or electro-biology produces over the nerves and muscles of animated objects, this young Gy produced by the motions of her slender rod over the springs and wheels of lifeless mechanism.

When I mentioned to my companions my astonishment at this influence over inanimate matter,—while owning that, in our world, I had witnessed phenomena which showed that over certain living organizations certain other living organizations could establish an influence genuine in itself, but often exaggerated by credulity or craft,—Zee, who was more interested in such subjects than her father, bade me stretch forth my hand, and then, placing her own beside it, she called my attention to certain distinctions of type and character. In the first place, the thumb of the Gy (and, as I afterwards noticed, of all that race, male or female) was much larger, at once longer and more massive, than is found with our species above ground. There is almost, in this, as great a difference as there is between the thumb of a man and that of a gorilla. Secondly, the palm is proportionately thicker than ours, the texture of the skin infinitely finer and softer, its average warmth is greater. More remarkable than all this, is a visible nerve, perceptible under the skin, which starts from the wrist skirting the ball of the thumb, and branching, fork-like, at the roots of the fore and middle fingers. “With your slight formation of thumb,” said the philosophical young Gy, “and with the absence of the nerve which you find more or less developed in the hands of our race, you can never achieve other than imperfect and feeble power over the agency of vril; but so far as the nerve is concerned, that is not found in the hands of our earliest progenitors, nor in those of the ruder tribes without the pale of the Vril-ya. It has been slowly developed in the course of generations, commencing in the early achievements, and increasing with the continuous exercise, of the vril power; therefore, in the course of one or two thousand years, such a nerve may possibly be engendered in those higher beings of your race who devote themselves to that paramount science through which

is attained command over all the subtler forces of nature permeated by vril. But when you talk of matter as something in itself inert and motionless, your parents or tutors surely cannot have left you so ignorant as not to know that no form of matter is motionless and inert: every particle is constantly in motion and constantly acted upon by agencies, of which heat is the most apparent and rapid, but vril the most subtle, and, when skilfully wielded, the most powerful. So that, in fact, the current launched by my hand and guided by my will does but render quicker and more potent the action which is eternally at work upon every particle of matter, however inert and stubborn it may seem. If a heap of metal be not capable of originating a thought of its own, yet, through its internal susceptibility to movement, it obtains the power to receive the thought of the intellectual agent at work on it; and which, when conveyed with a sufficient force of the vril power, it is as much compelled to obey as if it were displaced by a visible bodily force. It is animated for the time being by the soul thus infused into it, so that one may almost say that it lives and it reasons. Without this we could not make our automata supply the place of servants."

I was too much in awe of the thews and the learning of the young Gy to hazard the risk of arguing with her. I had read somewhere in my schoolboy days that a wise man, disputing with a Roman emperor, suddenly drew in his horns; and when the emperor asked him whether he had nothing further to say on his side of the question, replied, "Nay, Cæsar, there is no arguing against a reasoner who commands twenty-five legions."

Though I had a secret persuasion that, whatever the real effects of vril upon matter, Mr. Faraday could have proved her a very shallow philosopher as to its extent or its causes, I had no doubt that Zee could have brained all the Fellows of the Royal Society, one after the other, with a blow of her fist. Every sensible man knows that it is useless to argue with any ordinary female upon matters he comprehends; but to argue with a Gy seven feet high upon the mysteries of vril — as well argue in a desert, and with a simoom!

Amid the various departments to which the vast building of the College of Sages was appropriated, that which interested me most was devoted to the archæology of the Vrilya, and comprised a very ancient collection of portraits. In these the pigments and groundwork employed were of so durable a nature that even pictures said to be executed at dates as remote as those in the earliest annals of the Chinese retained much freshness of colour. In examining this collection, two things especially struck me,—firstly, That the pictures said to be between six and seven thousand years old were of a much higher degree of art than any produced within the last three or four thousand years; and, secondly, That the portraits within the former period much more resembled our own upper world and European types of countenance. Some of them, indeed, reminded me of the Italian heads which look out from the canvas of Titian, speaking of ambition or craft, of care or of grief, with furrows in which the passions have passed with iron ploughshare. These were the countenances of men who had lived in struggle and conflict before the discovery of the latent forces of vril had changed the character of society,—men who had fought with each other for power or fame as we in the upper world fight.

The type of face began to evince a marked change about a thousand years after the vril revolution, becoming then, with each generation, more serene, and in that serenity more terribly distinct from the faces of labouring and sinful men; while in proportion as the beauty and the grandeur of the countenance itself became more fully developed, the art of the painter became more tame and monotonous.

But the greatest curiosity in the collection was that of three portraits belonging to the pre-historical age, and, according to mythical tradition, taken by the orders of a philosopher, whose origin and attributes were as much mixed up with symbolical fable as those of an Indian Budh or a Greek Prometheus.

From this mysterious personage, at once a sage and a hero, all the principal sections of the Vrilya race pretend to trace a common origin.

The portraits are of the philosopher himself, of his grandfather, and great-grandfather. They are all at full length. The philosopher is attired in a long tunic which seems to form a loose suit of scaly armour, borrowed, perhaps, from some fish or reptile: but the feet and hands are exposed; the digits in both are wonderfully long, and webbed. He has little or no perceptible throat, and a low receding forehead, not at all the ideal of a sage's. He has bright brown prominent eyes, a very wide mouth and high cheek-bones, and a muddy complexion. According to tradition, this philosopher had lived to a patriarchal age, extending over many centuries, and he remembered distinctly in middle life his grandfather as surviving, and in childhood his great-grandfather; the portrait of the first he had taken, or caused to be taken, while yet alive, that of the latter was taken from his effigies in mummy. The portrait of the grandfather had the features and aspect of the philosopher, only much more exaggerated; he was not dressed, and the colour of his body was singular, — the breast and stomach yellow, the shoulders and legs of a dull bronze hue: the great-grandfather was a magnificent specimen of the Batrachian genus, a Giant Frog, *pur et simple*.

Among the pithy sayings which, according to tradition, the philosopher bequeathed to posterity in rhythmical form and sententious brevity, this is notably recorded: "Humble yourselves, my descendants; the father of your race was a *twat* (tadpole): exalt yourselves, my descendants, for it was the same Divine Thought which created your father that develops itself in exalting you."

Aph-Lin told me this fable while I gazed on the three Batrachian portraits. I said in reply: "You make a jest of my supposed ignorance and credulity as an uneducated Fish; but though these horrible daubs may be of great antiquity, and were intended, perhaps, for some rude caricature, I presume that none of your race, even in the less enlightened ages, ever believed that the great-grandson of a Frog became a sententious philosopher; or that any section, I will not say of the lofty Vrilya, but of the meanest varieties of the human race, had its origin in a Tadpole."

"Pardon me," answered Aph-Lin. "In what we call the Wrangling or Philosophical Period of History, which was at its height about seven thousand years ago, there was a very distinguished naturalist, who proved to the satisfaction of numerous disciples such analogical and anatomical agreements in structure between an An and a Frog, as to show that out of the one must have developed the other. They had some diseases in common; they were both subject to the same parasitical worms in the intestines; and, strange to say, the An has, in his structure, a swimming-bladder, no longer of any use to him, but which is a rudiment that clearly proves his descent from a Frog. Nor is there any argument against this theory to be found in the relative difference of size, for there are still existent in our world Frogs of a size and stature not inferior to our own, and many thousand years ago they appear to have been still larger."

"I understand that," said I, "because Frogs thus enormous are, according to our eminent geologists, who perhaps saw them in dreams, said to have been distinguished inhabitants of the upper world before the Deluge; and such Frogs are exactly the creatures likely to have flourished in the lakes and morasses of your subterranean regions. But pray, proceed."

"In the Wrangling Period of History, whatever one sage asserted another sage was sure to contradict. In fact, it was a maxim in that age that the human reason could only be sustained aloft by being tossed to and fro in the perpetual motion of contradiction; and therefore another sect of philosophers maintained the doctrine that the An was not the descendant of the Frog, but that the Frog was clearly the improved development of the An. The shape of the Frog, taken generally, was much more symmetrical than that of the An; beside the beautiful conformation of its lower limbs, its flanks, and shoulders, the majority of the Ana in that day were almost deformed, and certainly ill-shaped. Again, the Frog had the power to live alike on land and in water,—a mighty privilege, partaking of a spiritual essence denied to the An, since the disuse of his swimming-bladder clearly proves his degeneration from a higher development of species. Again, the earlier

racess of the Ana seem to have been covered with hair; and even to a comparatively recent date, hirsute bushes deformed the very faces of our ancestors, spreading wild over their cheeks and chins, as similar bushes, my poor Tish, spread wild over yours. But the object of the higher races of the Ana through countless generations has been to erase all vestige of connection with hairy vertebrata, and they have gradually eliminated that debasing capillary excrement by the law of sexual selection, the Gy-ci naturally preferring youth or the beauty of smooth faces. But the degree of the Frog in the scale of the vertebrata is shown in this, — that he has no hair at all, not even on his head. He was born to that hairless perfection which the most beautiful of the Ana, despite the culture of incalculable ages, have not yet attained. The wonderful complication and delicacy of a Frog's nervous system and arterial circulation were shown by this school to be more susceptible of enjoyment than our inferior, or at least simpler, physical frame allows us to be. The examination of a Frog's hand, if I may use that expression, accounted for its keener susceptibility to love, and to social life in general. In fact, gregarious and amatory as are the Ana, Frogs are still more so. In short, these two schools raged against each other, one asserting the An to be the perfected type of the Frog; the other that the Frog was the highest development of the An. The moralists were divided in opinion with the naturalists, but the bulk of them sided with the Frog-preference school. They said, with much plausibility, that in moral conduct (namely, in the adherence to rules best adapted to the health and welfare of the individual and the community) there could be no doubt of the vast superiority of the Frog. All history showed the wholesale immorality of the human race, the complete disregard, even by the most renowned among them, of the laws which they acknowledged to be essential to their own and the general happiness and well-being; but the severest critic of the Frog race could not detect in their manners a single aberration from the moral law tacitly recognized by themselves. And what, after all, can be the profit of civilization if superiority in moral con-

duct be not the aim for which it strives, and the test by which its progress should be judged?

"In fine, the adherents to this theory presumed that in some remote period the Frog race had been the improved development of the Human; but that, from causes which defied rational conjecture, they had not maintained their original position in the scale of nature; while the Ana, though of inferior organization, had, by dint less of their virtues than their vices, such as ferocity and cunning, gradually acquired ascendancy, much as among the human race itself tribes utterly barbarous have, by superiority in similar vices, utterly destroyed or reduced into insignificance tribes originally excelling them in mental gifts and culture. Unhappily these disputes became involved with the religious notions of that age; and as society was then administered under the government of the Koom-Posh, who, being the most ignorant, were of course the most inflammable class, the multitude took the whole question out of the hands of the philosophers; political chiefs saw that the Frog dispute, so taken up by the populace, could become a most valuable instrument of their ambition; and for not less than one thousand years war and massacre prevailed, during which period the philosophers on both sides were butchered, and the government of the Koom-Posh itself was happily brought to an end by the ascendancy of a family that clearly established its descent from the aboriginal tadpole, and furnished despotic rulers to the various nations of the Ana. These despots finally disappeared, at least from our communities, as the discovery of vril led to the tranquil institutions under which flourish all the races of the Vrila-ya."

"And do no wranglers or philosophers now exist to revive the dispute; or do they all recognize the origin of your race in the tadpole?"

"Nay, such disputes," said Zee, with a lofty smile, "belong to the Pah-bodh of the dark ages, and now only serve for the amusement of infants. When we know the elements out of which our bodies are composed, elements common to the humblest vegetable plants, can it signify whether the All-Wise

combined those elements out of one form more than another, in order to create that in which He has placed the capacity to receive the idea of Himself, and all the varied grandeurs of intellect to which that idea gives birth? The An in reality commenced to exist as An with the donation of that capacity, and, with that capacity, the sense to acknowledge that, however through the countless ages his race may improve in wisdom, it can never combine the elements at his command into the form of a tadpole."

"You speak well, Zee," said Aph-Lin; "and it is enough for us short-lived mortals to feel a reasonable assurance that whether the origin of the An was a tadpole or not, he is no more likely to become a tadpole again than the institutions of the Vrilya are likely to relapse into the heaving quagmire and certain strife-rot of a Koom-Posh."



CHAPTER XVII.

THE Vrilya, being excluded from all sight of the heavenly bodies, and having no other difference between night and day than that which they deem it convenient to make for themselves, do not, of course, arrive at their divisions of time by the same process that we do; but I found it easy, by the aid of my watch, which I luckily had about me, to compute their time with great nicety. I reserve for a future work on the science and literature of the Vrilya, should I live to complete it, all details as to the manner in which they arrive at their notation of time; and content myself here with saying, that in point of duration, their year differs very slightly from ours, but that the divisions of their year are by no means the same. Their day (including what we call night) consists of twenty hours of our time, instead of twenty-four, and of course their year comprises the correspondent increase in the number of days by which it is summed up. They subdivide

the twenty hours of their day thus: eight hours,¹ called the "Silent Hours," for repose; eight hours, called the "Earnest Time," for the pursuits and occupations of life; and four hours, called the "Easy Time" (with which what I may term their day closes), allotted to festivities, sport, recreation, or family converse, according to their several tastes and inclinations. But, in truth, out of doors there is no night. They maintain, both in the streets and in the surrounding country, to the limits of their territory, the same degree of light at all hours. Only, within doors, they lower it to a soft twilight during the Silent Hours. They have a great horror of perfect darkness, and their lights are never wholly extinguished. On occasions of festivity they continue the duration of full light, but equally keep note of the distinction between night and day, by mechanical contrivances which answer the purpose of our clocks and watches. They are very fond of music; and it is by music that these chronometers strike the principal division of time. At every one of their hours, during their day, the sounds coming from all the timepieces in their public buildings, and caught up, as it were, by those of houses or hamlets scattered amidst the landscapes without the city, have an effect singularly sweet, and yet singularly solemn. But during the Silent Hours these sounds are so subdued as to be only faintly heard by a waking ear. They have no change of seasons, and, at least in the territory of this tribe, the atmosphere seemed to me very equable,—warm as that of an Italian summer, and humid rather than dry; in the forenoon usually very still, but at times invaded by strong blasts from the rocks that made the borders of their domain. But time is the same to them for sowing or reaping as in the Golden Isles of the ancient poets. At the same moment you see the younger plants in blade or bud, the older in ear or fruit. All fruit-bearing plants, however, after fruitage, either shed or change the colour of their leaves. But that which interested me most in reckoning up their divisions of

¹ For the sake of convenience, I adopt the words hours, days, years, etc., in any general reference to subdivisions of time among the Vril-ya, — those terms but loosely corresponding, however, with such subdivisions.

time was the ascertainment of the average duration of life amongst them. I found on minute inquiry that this very considerably exceeded the term allotted to us on the upper earth. What seventy years are to us, one hundred years are to them. Nor is this the only advantage they have over us in longevity, for as few among us attain to the age of seventy, so, on the contrary, few among them die before the age of one hundred; and they enjoy a general degree of health and vigour which makes life itself a blessing even to the last. Various causes contribute to this result: the absence of all alcoholic stimulants; temperance in food; more especially, perhaps, a serenity of mind undisturbed by anxious occupations and eager passions. They are not tormented by our avarice or our ambition; they appear perfectly indifferent even to the desire of fame; they are capable of great affection, but their love shows itself in a tender and cheerful complaisance, and, while forming their happiness, seems rarely, if ever, to constitute their woe. As the Gy is sure only to marry where she herself fixes her choice, and as here, not less than above ground, it is the female on whom the happiness of home depends, so the Gy, having chosen the mate she prefers to all others, is lenient to his faults, consults his humours, and does her best to secure his attachment. The death of a beloved one is of course with them, as with us, a cause of sorrow; but not only is death with them so much more rare before that age in which it becomes a release, but when it does occur the survivor takes much more consolation than, I am afraid, the generality of us do, in the certainty of reunion in another and yet happier life.

All these causes, then, concur to their healthful and enjoyable longevity, though, no doubt, much also must be owing to hereditary organization. According to their records, however, in those earlier stages of their society when they lived in communities resembling ours, agitated by fierce competition, their lives were considerably shorter, and their maladies more numerous and grave. They themselves say that the duration of life, too, has increased, and is still on the increase, since their discovery of the invigorating and medici-

nal properties of vril, applied for remedial purposes. They have few professional and regular practitioners of medicine, and these are chiefly Gy-ei, who, especially if widowed and childless, find great delight in the healing art, and even undertake surgical operations in those cases required by accident, or, more rarely, by disease.

They have their diversions and entertainments, and, during the Easy Time of their day, they are wont to assemble in great numbers for those winged sports in the air which I have already described. They have also public halls for music, and even theatres, at which are performed pieces that appeared to me somewhat to resemble the plays of the Chinese, — dramas that are thrown back into distant times for their events and personages, in which all classic unities are outrageously violated, and the hero, in one scene a child, in the next is an old man, and so forth. These plays are of very ancient composition. They appeared to me extremely dull, on the whole, but were relieved by startling mechanical contrivances, and a kind of farcical broad humour, and detached passages of great vigour and power expressed in language highly poetical, but somewhat overcharged with metaphor and trope. In fine, they seemed to me very much what the plays of Shakspeare seemed to a Parisian in the time of Louis XV., or perhaps to an Englishman in the reign of Charles II.

The audience, of which the Gy-ei constituted the chief portion, appeared to enjoy greatly the representation of these dramas, which, for so sedate and majestic a race of females, surprised me, till I observed that all the performers were under the age of adolescence, and conjectured truly that the mothers and sisters came to please their children and brothers.

I have said that these dramas are of great antiquity. No new plays, indeed no imaginative works sufficiently important to survive their immediate day, appear to have been composed for several generations. In fact, though there is no lack of new publications, and they have even what may be called newspapers, these are chiefly devoted to mechanical science,

reports of new inventions, announcements respecting various details of business,—in short, to practical matters. Sometimes a child writes a little tale of adventure, or a young Gy vents her amorous hopes or fears in a poem; but these effusions are of very little merit, and are seldom read except by children and maiden Gy-ei. The most interesting works of a purely literary character are those of explorations and travels into other regions of this nether world, which are generally written by young emigrants, and are read with great avidity by the relations and friends they have left behind.

I could not help expressing to Aph-Lin my surprise that a community in which mechanical science had made so marvellous a progress, and in which intellectual civilization had exhibited itself in realizing those objects for the happiness of the people, which the political philosophers above ground had, after ages of struggle, pretty generally agreed to consider unattainable visions, should nevertheless be so wholly without a contemporaneous literature, despite the excellence to which culture had brought a language at once rich and simple, vigorous and musical.

My host replied: "Do you not perceive that a literature such as you mean would be wholly incompatible with that perfection of social or political felicity at which you do us the honour to think we have arrived? We have at last, after centuries of struggle, settled into a form of government with which we are content, and in which, as we allow no differences of rank, and no honours are paid to administrators distinguishing them from others, there is no stimulus given to individual ambition. No one would read works advocating theories that involved any political or social change, and therefore no one writes them. If now and then an An feels himself dissatisfied with our tranquil mode of life, he does not attack it; he goes away. Thus all that part of literature (and to judge by the ancient books in our public libraries, it was once a very large part) which relates to speculative theories on society is become utterly extinct. Again, formerly there was a vast deal written respecting the attributes and

essence of the All-Good, and the arguments for and against a future state; but now we all recognize two facts,—that there is a Divine Being, and there is a future state, and we all equally agree that if we wrote our fingers to the bone, we could not throw any light upon the nature and conditions of that future state, or quicken our apprehensions of the attributes and essence of that Divine Being. Thus another part of literature has become also extinct, happily for our race; for in the times when so much was written on subjects which no one could determine, people seemed to live in a perpetual state of quarrel and contention. So, too, a vast part of our ancient literature consists of historical records of wars and revolutions during the times when the Ana lived in large and turbulent societies, each seeking aggrandizement at the expense of the other. You see our serene mode of life now; such it has been for ages. We have no events to chronicle. What more of us can be said than that ‘they were born, they were happy, they died’? Coming next to that part of literature which is more under the control of the imagination, such as what we call ‘Glaubsila,’ or colloquially ‘Glaubs,’ and you call ‘poetry,’ the reasons for its decline amongst us are abundantly obvious.

“We find, by referring to the great masterpieces in that department of literature which we all still read with pleasure, but of which none would tolerate imitations, that they consist in the portraiture of passions which we no longer experience,—ambition, vengeance, unballowed love, the thirst for warlike renown, and such like. The old poets lived in an atmosphere impregnated with these passions, and felt vividly what they expressed glowingly. No one can express such passions now, for no one can feel them, or meet with any sympathy in his readers if he did. Again, the old poetry has a main element in its dissection of those complex mysteries of human character which conduce to abnormal vices and crimes, or lead to signal and extraordinary virtues; but our society, having got rid of temptations to any prominent vices and crimes, has necessarily rendered the moral average so equal, that there are no very salient virtues. Without its

ancient food of strong passions, vast crimes, heroic excellences, poetry therefore is, if not actually starved to death, reduced to a very meagre diet. There is still the poetry of description,—description of rocks, and trees, and waters, and common household life; and our young Gy-ei weave much of this insipid kind of composition into their love verses.”

“Such poetry,” said I, “might surely be made very charming; and we have critics amongst us who consider it a higher kind than that which depicts the crimes, or analyzes the passions, of man. At all events, poetry of the insipid kind you mention is a poetry that nowadays commands more readers than any other among the people I have left above ground.”

“Possibly; but then I suppose the writers take great pains with the language they employ, and devote themselves to the culture and polish of words and rhythms as an art?”

“Certainly they do: all great poets must do that. Though the gift of poetry may be inborn, the gift requires as much care to make it available as a block of metal does to be made into one of your engines.”

“And doubtless your poets have some incentive to bestow all those pains upon such verbal prettinesses?”

“Well, I presume their instinct of song would make them sing as the bird does; but to cultivate the song into verbal or artificial prettiness probably does need an inducement from without, and our poets find it in the love of fame,—perhaps, now and then, in the want of money.”

“Precisely so. But in our society we attach fame to nothing which man, in that moment of his duration which is called ‘life,’ can perform. We should soon lose that equality which constitutes the felicitous essence of our commonwealth if we selected any individual for pre-eminent praise: pre-eminent praise would confer pre-eminent power, and the moment it were given, evil passions, now dormant, would awake; other men would immediately covet praise, then would arise envy, and with envy hate, and with hate calumny and persecution. Our history tells us that most of the poets and most of the writers who, in the old time, were favoured

with the greatest praise, were also assailed by the greatest vituperation, and even, on the whole, rendered very unhappy, partly by the attacks of jealous rivals, partly by the diseased mental constitution which an acquired sensitiveness to praise and to blame tends to engender. As for the stimulus of want, in the first place, no man in our community knows the goad of poverty; and, secondly, if he did, almost every occupation would be more lucrative than writing.

"Our public libraries contain all the books of the past which time has preserved; those books, for the reasons above stated, are infinitely better than any can write nowadays, and they are open to all to read without cost. We are not such fools as to pay for reading inferior books, when we can read superior books for nothing."

"With us, novelty has an attraction; and a new book, if bad, is read when an old book, though good, is neglected."

"Novelty to barbarous states of society struggling in despair for something better has no doubt an attraction denied to us, who see nothing to gain in novelties; but, after all, it is observed by one of our great authors four thousand years ago, that 'he who studies old books will always find in them something new, and he who reads new books will always find in them something old.' But to return to the question you have raised: there being then among us no stimulus to pain-taking labour, whether in desire of fame or in pressure of want, such as have the poetic temperament, no doubt, vent it in song, as you say the bird sings; but for lack of elaborate culture it fails of an audience, and, failing of an audience, dies out, of itself, amidst the ordinary avocations of life."

"But how is it that these discouragements to the cultivation of literature do not operate against that of science?"

"Your question amazes me. The motive to science is the love of truth apart from all consideration of fame, and science with us too is devoted almost solely to practical uses, essential to our social conservation and the comforts of our daily life. No fame is asked by the inventor, and none is given to him; he enjoys an occupation congenial to his tastes, and needing no wear and tear of the passions. Man must have

exercise for his mind as well as body; and continuous exercise, rather than violent, is best for both. Our most ingenious cultivators of science are, as a general rule, the longest lived and the most free from disease. Painting is an amusement to many, but the art is not what it was in former times, when the great painters in our various communities vied with each other for the prize of a golden crown, which gave them a social rank equal to that of the kings under whom they lived. You will thus doubtless have observed in our archaeological department how superior in point of art the pictures were several thousand years ago. Perhaps it is because music is, in reality, more allied to science than it is to poetry, that, of all the pleasurable arts, music is that which flourishes the most amongst us. Still, even in music the absence of stimulus in praise or fame has served to prevent any great superiority of one individual over another; and we rather excel in choral music, with the aid of our vast mechanical instruments, in which we make great use of the agency of water,¹ than in single performers. We have had scarcely any original composer for some ages. Our favourite airs are very ancient in substance, but have admitted many complicated variations by inferior, though ingenious, musicians."

"Are there no political societies among the Ana which are animated by those passions, subjected to those crimes, and admitting those disparities in condition, in intellect, and in morality, which the state of your tribe, or indeed of the Vrilya generally, has left behind in its progress to perfection? If so, among such societies perhaps Poetry and her sister arts still continue to be honoured and to improve?"

"There are such societies in remote regions, but we do not admit them within the pale of civilized communities; we scarcely even give them the name of Ana, and certainly not that of Vrilya. They are barbarians, living chiefly in that low stage of being, Koom-Posh, tending necessarily to its own hideous dissolution in Glek-Nas. Their wretched exist-

¹ This may remind the student of Nero's invention of a musical machine, by which water was made to perform the part of an orchestra, and on which he was employed when the conspiracy against him broke out.

ence is passed in perpetual contest and perpetual change. When they do not fight with their neighbours, they fight among themselves. They are divided into sections, which abuse, plunder, and sometimes murder each other, and on the most frivolous points of difference that would be unintelligible to us if we had not read history, and seen that we too have passed through the same early state of ignorance and barbarism. Any trifle is sufficient to set them together by the ears. They pretend to be all equals; and the more they have struggled to be so, by removing old distinctions and starting afresh, the more glaring and intolerable the disparity becomes, because nothing in hereditary affections and associations is left to soften the one naked distinction between the many who have nothing and the few who have much. Of course the many hate the few, but without the few they could not live. The many are always assailing the few; sometimes they exterminate the few; but as soon as they have done so, a new few starts out of the many, and is harder to deal with than the old few. For where societies are large, and competition to have something is the predominant fever, there must be always many losers and few gainers. In short, the people I speak of are savages groping their way in the dark towards some gleam of light, and would demand our commiseration for their infirmities, if, like all savages, they did not provoke their own destruction by their arrogance and cruelty. Can you imagine that creatures of this kind, armed only with such miserable weapons as you may see in our museum of antiquities, clumsy iron tubes charged with saltpetre, have more than once threatened with destruction a tribe of the Vrilya, which dwells nearest to them, because they say they have thirty millions of population,—and that tribe may have fifty thousand,—if the latter do not accept their notions of Soc-Sec (money-getting) on some trading principles which they have the imprudence to call a 'law of civilization'?"

"But thirty millions of population are formidable odds against fifty thousand!"

My host stared at me astonished. "Stranger," said he, "you could not have heard me say that this threatened tribe

belongs to the Vrîl-ya; and it only waits for these savages to declare war, in order to commission some half-a-dozen small children to sweep away their whole population."

At these words I felt a thrill of horror, recognizing much more affinity with "the savages" than I did with the Vrîl-ya, and remembering all I had said in praise of the glorious American institutions, which Aph-Lin stigmatized as Koom-Posh. Recovering my self-possession, I asked if there were modes of transit by which I could safely visit this temerarious and remote people.

"You can travel with safety, by vrîl agency, either along the ground or amid the air, throughout all the range of the communities with which we are allied and akin; but I cannot vouch for your safety in barbarous nations governed by different laws from ours,—nations, indeed, so benighted, that there are among them large numbers who actually live by stealing from each other, and one could not with safety in the Silent Hours even leave the doors of one's own house open."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Taë, who came to inform us that he, having been deputed to discover and destroy the enormous reptile which I had seen on my first arrival, had been on the watch for it ever since his visit to me, and had begun to suspect that my eyes had deceived me, or that the creature had made its way through the cavities within the rocks to the wild regions in which dwelt its kindred race, when it gave evidences of its whereabouts by a great devastation of the herbage bordering one of the lakes. "And," said Taë, "I feel sure that within that lake it is now hiding. So" (turning to me) "I thought it might amuse you to accompany me to see the way we destroy such unpleasant visitors." As I looked at the face of the young child, and called to mind the enormous size of the creature he proposed to exterminate, I felt myself shudder with fear for him, and perhaps fear for myself, if I accompanied him in such a chase; but my curiosity to witness the destructive effects of the boasted vrîl, and my unwillingness to lower myself in the eyes of an infant by betraying appre-

hensions of personal safety, prevailed over my first impulse. Accordingly, I thanked Taë for his courteous consideration for my amusement, and professed my willingness to set out with him on so diverting an enterprise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Taë and myself, on quitting the town, and leaving to the left the main road which led to it, struck into the fields, the strange and solemn beauty of the landscape, lighted up, by numberless lamps, to the verge of the horizon, fascinated my eyes, and rendered me for some time an inattentive listener to the talk of my companion.

Along our way various operations of agriculture were being carried on by machinery, the forms of which were new to me, and for the most part very graceful; for among these people art, being so cultivated for the sake of mere utility, exhibits itself in adorning or refining the shapes of useful objects. Precious metals and gems are so profuse among them, that they are lavished on things devoted to purposes the most commonplace; and their love of utility leads them to beautify its tools, and quickens their imagination in a way unknown to themselves.

In all service, whether in or out of doors, they make great use of automaton figures, which are so ingenious, and so pliant to the operations of vril, that they actually seem gifted with reason. It was scarcely possible to distinguish the figures I beheld, apparently guiding or superintending the rapid movements of vast engines, from human forms endowed with thought.

By degrees, as we continued to walk on, my attention became roused by the lively and acute remarks of my companion. The intelligence of the children among this race is marvellously precocious, perhaps from the habit of having

intrusted to them, at so early an age, the toils and responsibilities of middle age. Indeed, in conversing with Taë, I felt as if talking with some superior and observant man of my own years. I asked him if he could form any estimate of the number of communities into which the race of the Vril-ya is subdivided.

"Not exactly," he said, "because they multiply, of course, every year as the surplus of each community is drafted off. But I heard my father say that, according to the last report, there were a million and a half of communities speaking our language, and adopting our institutions and forms of life and government; but, I believe, with some differences, about which you had better ask Zee. She knows more than most of the Ana do. An An cares less for things that do not concern him than a Gy does; the Gy-ei are inquisitive creatures."

"Does each community restrict itself to the same number of families or amount of population that you do?"

"No; some have much smaller populations, some have larger,—varying according to the extent of the country they appropriate, or to the degree of excellence to which they have brought their machinery. Each community sets its own limit according to circumstances, taking care always that there shall never arise any class of poor by the pressure of population upon the productive powers of the domain; and that no State shall be too large for a government resembling that of a single well-ordered family. I imagine that no Vril community exceeds thirty thousand households. But, as a general rule, the smaller the community, provided there be hands enough to do justice to the capacities of the territory it occupies, the richer each individual is, and the larger the sum contributed to the general treasury; above all, the happier and the more tranquil is the whole political body, and the more perfect the products of its industry. The State which all tribes of the Vril-ya acknowledge to be the highest in civilization, and which has brought the vril force to its fullest development, is perhaps the smallest. It limits itself to four thousand families; but every inch of its territory is cultivated to the utmost perfection of garden ground; its ma-

chinery excels that of every other tribe; and there is no product of its industry in any department which is not sought for, at extraordinary prices, by each community of our race. All our tribes make this State their model, considering that we should reach the highest state of civilization allowed to mortals if we could unite the greatest degree of happiness with the highest degree of intellectual achievement; and it is clear that the smaller the society the less difficult that will be. Ours is too large for it."

This reply set me thinking. I reminded myself of that little State of Athens, with only twenty thousand free citizens, and which to this day our mightiest nations regard as the supreme guide and model in all departments of intellect. But then Athens permitted fierce rivalry and perpetual change, and was certainly not happy. Rousing myself from the reverie into which these reflections had plunged me, I brought back our talk to the subjects connected with emigration.

"But," said I, "when, I suppose yearly, a certain number among you agree to quit home and found a new community elsewhere, they must necessarily be very few, and scarcely sufficient, even with the help of the machines they take with them, to clear the ground, and build towns, and form a civilized State with the comforts and luxuries in which they had been reared."

"You mistake. All the tribes of the Vrilya are in constant communication with each other, and settle amongst themselves each year what proportion of one community will unite with the emigrants of another, so as to form a State of sufficient size; and the place for emigration is agreed upon at least a year before, and pioneers sent from each State to level rocks, and embank waters, and construct houses; so that when the emigrants at last go they find a city already made, and a country around it at least partially cleared. Our hardy life as children makes us take cheerfully to travel and adventure. I mean to emigrate myself when of age."

"Do the emigrants always select places hitherto uninhabited and barren?"

"As yet generally, because it is our rule never to destroy except where necessary to our well being. Of course, we cannot settle in lands already occupied by the Vrilya; and if we take the cultivated lands of the other races of Ana, we must utterly destroy the previous inhabitants. Sometimes, as it is, we take waste spots, and find that a troublesome, quarrelsome race of Ana, especially if under the administration of Koom-Posh or Glek-Nas, resents our vicinity, and picks a quarrel with us; then, of course, as menacing our welfare, we destroy it: there is no coming to terms of peace with a race so idiotic that it is always changing the form of government which represents it. Koom-Posh," said the child, emphatically, "is bad enough, still it has brains, though at the back of its head, and is not without a heart; but in Glek-Nas the brain and heart of the creatures disappear, and they become all jaws, claws, and belly."

"You express yourself strongly. Allow me to inform you that I myself, and I am proud to say it, am the citizen of a Koom-Posh."

"I no longer," answered Taë, "wonder to see you here so far from your home. What was the condition of your native community before it became a Koom-Posh?"

"A settlement of emigrants,—like those settlements which your tribe sends forth; but so far unlike your settlements, that it was dependent on the State from which it came. It shook off that yoke, and, crowned with eternal glory, became a Koom-Posh."

"Eternal glory! how long has the Koom-Posh lasted?"

"About one hundred years."

"The length of an An's life,—a very young community. In much less than another one hundred years your Koom-Posh will be a Glek-Nas."

"Nay, the oldest States in the world I come from have such faith in its duration, that they are all gradually shaping their institutions so as to melt into ours, and their most thoughtful politicians say that, whether they like it or not, the inevitable tendency of these old States is towards Koom-Posh-erie."

"The old States?"

"Yes, the old States."

"With populations very small in proportion to the area of productive land?"

"On the contrary, with populations very large in proportion to that area."

"I see! old States indeed! — so old as to become drivelling if they don't pack off that surplus population as we do ours. Very old States, — very, very old! Pray, Tish, do you think it wise for very old men to try to turn head-over-heels as very young children do? And if you asked them why they attempted such antics, should you not laugh if they answered that by imitating very young children they could become very young children themselves? Ancient history abounds with instances of this sort a great many thousand years ago, and in every instance a very old State that played at Koom-Posh soon tumbled into Glek-Nas. Then, in horror of its own self, it cried out for a master, as an old man in his dotage cries out for a nurse; and after a succession of masters or nurses, more or less long, that very old State died out of history. A very old State attempting Koom-Posh-erie is like a very old man who pulls down the house to which he has been accustomed, but he has so exhausted his vigour in pulling down, that all he can do in the way of rebuilding is to run up a crazy hut, in which himself and his successors whine out 'How the wind blows! How the walls shake!'"

"My dear Taë, I make all excuse for your unenlightened prejudices, which every schoolboy educated in a Koom-Posh could easily controvert, though he might not be so precociously learned in ancient history as you appear to be."

"I learned! not a bit of it. But would a schoolboy, educated in your Koom-Posh, ask his great-great-grandfather or great-great-grandmother to stand on his or her head with the feet uppermost; and if the poor old folks hesitated, say, 'What do you fear? — see how I do it!'"

"Taë, I disdain to argue with a child of your age. I repeat, I make allowances for your want of that culture which a Koom-Posh alone can bestow."

"I, in my turn," answered Taë, with an air of the suave

but lofty good breeding which characterizes his race, "not only make allowances for you as not educated among the Vrilya, but I entreat you to vouchsafe me your pardon for insufficient respect to the habits and opinions of so amiable a — Tish!"

I ought before to have observed that I was commonly called Tish by my host and his family, as being a polite and indeed a pet name, metaphorically signifying a small barbarian, literally a Froglet; the children apply it endearingly to the tame species of Frog which they keep in their gardens.

We had now reached the banks of a lake, and Taë here paused to point out to me the ravages made in fields skirting it. "The enemy certainly lies within these waters," said Taë. "Observe what shoals of fish are crowded together at the margin,— even the great fishes with the small ones, who are their habitual prey, and who generally shun them; all forget their instincts in the presence of a common destroyer. This reptile certainly must belong to the class of the Krek-a, a class more devouring than any other, and said to be among the few surviving species of the world's dreadest inhabitants before the Ana were created. The appetite of a Krek is insatiable,— it feeds alike upon vegetable and animal life; but for the swift-footed creatures of the elk species it is too slow in its movements. Its favourite dainty is an An when it can catch him unawares; and hence the Ana destroy it relentlessly whenever it enters their dominion. I have heard that when our forefathers first cleared this country, these monsters, and others like them, abounded, and, vril being then undiscovered, many of our race were devoured. It was impossible to exterminate them wholly till that discovery which constitutes the power and sustains the civilization of our race. But after the uses of vril became familiar to us, all creatures inimical to us were soon annihilated. Still, once a year or so, one of these enormous reptiles wanders from the unreclaimed and savage districts beyond, and within my memory one seized upon a young Gy who was bathing in this very lake. Had she been on land and armed with her staff, it would not have dared even to show itself; for, like all sav-

age creatures, the reptile has a marvellous instinct, which warns it against the bearer of the vril wand. How they teach their young to avoid him, though seen for the first time, is one of those mysteries which you may ask Zee to explain, for I cannot.¹ So long as I stand here, the monster will not stir from its lurking-place; but we must now decoy it forth."

"Will not that be difficult?"

"Not at all. Seat yourself yonder on that crag (about one hundred yards from the bank), while I retire to a distance. In a short time the reptile will catch sight or scent of you, and, perceiving that you are no vril-bearer, will come forth to devour you. As soon as it is fairly out of the water it becomes my prey."

"Do you mean to tell me that I am to be the decoy to that horrible monster which could engulf me within its jaws in a second! I beg to decline."

The child laughed. "Fear nothing," said he; "only sit still."

Instead of obeying this command, I made a bound, and was about to take fairly to my heels, when Taë touched me lightly on the shoulder, and fixing his eyes steadily on mine, I was rooted to the spot. All power of volition left me. Submissive to the infant's gesture, I followed him to the crag he had indicated, and seated myself there in silence. Most readers have seen something of the effects of electro-biology, whether genuine or spurious. No professor of that doubtful craft had ever been able to influence a thought or a movement of mine, but I was a mere machine at the will of this terrible child. Meanwhile he expanded his wings, soared aloft, and alighted amidst a copse at the brow of a hill at some distance.

I was alone; and turning my eyes with an indescribable sensation of horror towards the lake, I kept them fixed on its water, spell-bound. It might be ten or fifteen minutes, to

¹ The reptile in this instinct does but resemble our wild birds and animals, which will not come in reach of a man armed with a gun. When the electric wires were first put up, partridges struck against them in their flight, and fell down wounded. No younger generations of partridges meet with a similar accident.

me it seemed ages, before the still surface, gleaming under the lamp-light, began to be agitated towards the centre. At the same time the shoals of fish near the margin evinced their sense of the enemy's approach by splash and leap and bubbling circle. I could detect their hurried flight hither and thither, some even casting themselves ashore. A long, dark, undulous furrow came moving along the waters, nearer and nearer, till the vast head of the reptile emerged,—its jaws bristling with fangs, and its dull eyes fixing themselves hungrily on the spot where I sat motionless. And now its fore feet were on the strand, now its enormous breast, scaled on either side as in armour, in the centre showing corrugated skin of a dull venomous yellow; and now its whole length was on the land, a hundred feet or more from the jaw to the tail. Another stride of those ghastly feet would have brought it to the spot where I sat. There was but a moment between me and this grim form of death, when what seemed a flash of lightning shot through the air, smote, and, for a space in time briefer than that in which a man can draw his breath, enveloped the monster; and then, as the flash vanished, there lay before me a blackened, charred, smouldering mass, a something gigantic, but of which even the outlines of form were burned away, and rapidly crumbling into dust and ashes. I remained still seated, still speechless, ice-cold with a new sensation of dread: what had been horror was now awe.

I felt the child's hand on my head. Fear left me, the spell was broken; I rose up. "You see with what ease the Vrilya destroy their enemies," said Taë; and then, moving towards the bank, he contemplated the smouldering relics of the monster, and said quietly, "I have destroyed larger creatures, but none with so much pleasure. Yes, it is a Krek; what suffering it must have inflicted while it lived!" Then he took up the poor fishes that had flung themselves ashore, and restored them mercifully to their native element.

CHAPTER XIX.

As we walked back to the town, Taë took a new and circuitous way, in order to show me what, to use a familiar term, I will call the "Station," from which emigrants or travellers to other communities commence their journeys. I had, on a former occasion, expressed a wish to see their vehicles. These I found to be of two kinds, one for land-journeys, one for aerial voyages: the former were of all sizes and forms, some not larger than an ordinary carriage, some movable houses of one story and containing several rooms, furnished according to the ideas of comfort or luxury which are entertained by the Vrilya. The aerial vehicles were of light substances, not the least resembling our balloons, but rather our boats and pleasure-vessels, with helm and rudder, with large wings as paddles, and a central machine worked by vril. All the vehicles both for land or air were indeed worked by that potent and mysterious agency.

I saw a convoy set out on its journey, but it had few passengers, containing chiefly articles of merchandise, and was bound to a neighbouring community; for among all the tribes of the Vrilya there is considerable commercial interchange. I may here observe, that their money currency does not consist of the precious metals, which are too common among them for that purpose. The smaller coins in ordinary use are manufactured from a peculiar fossil shell, the comparatively scarce remnant of some very early deluge, or other convulsion of nature, by which a species has become extinct. It is minute, and flat as an oyster, and takes a jewel-like polish. This coinage circulates among all the tribes of the Vrilya. Their larger transactions are carried on much like ours, by bills of exchange, and thin metallic plates which answer the purpose of our bank-notes.

Let me take this occasion of adding that the taxation among the tribe I became acquainted with was very considerable,

compared with the amount of population; but I never heard that any one grumbled at it, for it was devoted to purposes of universal utility, and indeed necessary to the civilization of the tribe. The cost of lighting so large a range of country, of providing for emigration, of maintaining the public buildings at which the various operations of national intellect were carried on, from the first education of an infant to the departments to which the College of Sages were perpetually trying new experiments in mechanical science,—all these involved the necessity for considerable State funds. To these I must add an item that struck me as very singular. I have said that all the human labour required by the State is carried on by children up to the marriageable age. For this labour the State pays, and at a rate immeasurably higher than our remuneration to labour even in the United States. According to their theory, every child, male or female, on attaining the marriageable age, and there terminating the period of labour, should have acquired enough for an independent competence during life. As, no matter what the disparity of fortune in the parents, all the children must equally serve, so all are equally paid according to their several ages or the nature of their work. When the parents or friends choose to retain a child in their own service, they must pay into the public fund in the same ratio as the State pays to the children it employs; and this sum is handed over to the child when the period of service expires. This practice serves, no doubt, to render the notion of social equality familiar and agreeable; and if it may be said that all the children form a democracy, no less truly it may be said that all the adults form an aristocracy. The exquisite politeness and refinement of manners among the Vril-ya, the generosity of their sentiments, the absolute leisure they enjoy for following out their own private pursuits, the amenities of their domestic intercourse, in which they seem as members of one noble order that can have no distrust of each other's word or deed,—all combine to make the Vril-ya the most perfect nobility which a political disciple of Plato or Sidney could conceive for the ideal of an aristocratic republic.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM the date of the expedition with Taë which I have just narrated, the child paid me frequent visits. He had taken a liking to me, which I cordially returned. Indeed, as he was not yet twelve years old, and had not commenced the course of scientific studies with which childhood closes in that country, my intellect was less inferior to his than to that of the elder members of his race, especially of the Gy-ei, and most especially of the accomplished Zee. The children of the Vrilya, having upon their minds the weight of so many active duties and grave responsibilities, are not generally mirthful; but Taë, with all his wisdom, had much of the playful good-humour one often finds the characteristic of elderly men of genius. He felt that sort of pleasure in my society which a boy of a similar age in the upper world has in the company of a pet dog or monkey. It amused him to try and teach me the ways of his people, as it amuses a nephew of mine to make his poodle walk on his hind legs, or jump through a hoop. I willingly lent myself to such experiments, but I never achieved the success of the poodle. I was very much interested at first in the attempt to ply the wings which the youngest of the Vrilya use as nimbly and easily as ours do their legs and arms; but my efforts were attended with contusions serious enough to make me abandon them in despair.

The wings, as I before said, are very large, reaching to the knee, and in repose thrown back so as to form a very graceful mantle. They are composed from the feathers of a gigantic bird that abounds in the rocky heights of the country,—the colour mostly white, but sometimes with reddish streaks. They are fastened round the shoulders with light but strong springs of steel; and, when expanded, the arms slide through loops for that purpose, forming, as it were, a stout central

membrane. As the arms are raised, a tubular lining beneath the vest or tunic becomes, by mechanical contrivance, inflated with air, increased or diminished at will by the movement of the arms, and serving to buoy the whole form as on bladders. The wings and the balloon-like apparatus are highly charged with vril; and when the body is thus wafted upward, it seems to become singularly lightened of its weight. I found it easy enough to soar from the ground; indeed, when the wings were spread it was scarcely possible not to soar, but then came the difficulty and the danger. I utterly failed in the power to use and direct the pinions, though I am considered among my own race unusually alert and ready in bodily exercises, and am a very practised swimmer. I could only make the most confused and blundering efforts at flight. I was the servant of the wings; the wings were not my servants,—they were beyond my control; and when by a violent strain of muscle, and, I must fairly own, in that abnormal strength which is given by excessive fright, I curbed their gyrations and brought them near to the body, it seemed as if I lost the sustaining power stored in them and the connecting bladders, as when air is let out of a balloon, and found myself precipitated again to earth; saved, indeed, by some spasmodic flutterings, from being dashed to pieces, but not saved from the bruises and the stun of a heavy fall. I would, however, have persevered in my attempts, but for the advice or the commands of the scientific Zee, who had benevolently accompanied my flutterings, and indeed, on the last occasion, flying just under me, received my form as it fell on her own expanded wings, and preserved me from breaking my head on the roof of the pyramid from which we had ascended.

"I see," she said, "that your trials are in vain, not from the fault of the wings and their appurtenances, nor from any imperfectness and malformation of your own corpuscular system, but from irremediable, because organic, defect in your power of volition. Learn that the connection between the will and the agencies of that fluid which has been subjected to the control of the Vrilya was never established by the first discoverers, never achieved by a single generation; it has

gone on increasing, like other properties of race, in proportion as it has been uniformly transmitted from parent to child, so that, at last, it has become an instinct; and an infant An of our race wills to fly as intuitively and unconsciously as he wills to walk. He thus plies his invented or artificial wings with as much safety as a bird plies those with which it is born. I did not think sufficiently of this when I allowed you to try an experiment which allured me, for I longed to have in you a companion. I shall abandon the experiment now. Your life is becoming dear to me." Here-with the Gy's voice and face softened, and I felt more seriously alarmed than I had been in my previous flights.

Now that I am on the subject of wings, I ought not to omit mention of a custom among the Gy-ei which seems to me very pretty and tender in the sentiment it implies. A Gy wears wings habitually while yet a virgin; she joins the Ana in their aerial sports; she adventures alone and afar into the wilder regions of the sunless world: in the boldness and height of her soarings, not less than in the grace of her movements, she excels the opposite sex. But from the day of marriage she wears wings no more; she suspends them with her own willing hand over the nuptial couch, never to be resumed unless the marriage tie be severed by divorce or death.

Now when Zee's voice and eyes thus softened — and at that softening I prophetically recoiled and shuddered — Taë, who had accompanied us in our flights, but who, child-like, had been much more amused with my awkwardness than sympathizing in my fears or aware of my danger, hovered over us, poised amidst the still radiant air, serene and motionless on his outspread wings, and hearing the endearing words of the young Gy, laughed aloud. Said he, "If the Tish cannot learn the use of wings, you may still be his companion, Zee, for you can suspend your own."

CHAPTER XXI.

I HAD for some time observed in my host's highly informed and powerfully proportioned daughter that kindly and protective sentiment which, whether above the earth or below it, an all-wise Providence has bestowed upon the feminine division of the human race. But until very lately I had ascribed it to that affection for "pets" which a human female at every age shares with a human child. I now became painfully aware that the feeling with which Zee deigned to regard me was different from that which I had inspired in Taë; but this conviction gave me none of that complacent gratification which the vanity of man ordinarily conceives from a flattering appreciation of his personal merits on the part of the fair sex; on the contrary, it inspired me with fear. Yet of all the Gy-ei in the community, if Zee were perhaps the wisest and the strongest, she was, by common repute, the gentlest, and she was certainly the most popularly beloved. The desire to aid, to succour, to protect, to comfort, to bless, seemed to pervade her whole being. Though the complicated miseries that originate in penury and guilt are unknown to the social system of the Vrilya, still, no sage had yet discovered in vril an agency which could banish sorrow from life; and wherever amongst her people sorrow found its way, there Zee followed in the mission of comforter. Did some sister Gy fail to secure the love she sighed for? Zee sought her out, and brought all the resources of her lore, and all the consolations of her sympathy, to bear upon a grief that so needs the solace of a confidant. In the rare cases when grave illness seized upon childhood or youth, and the cases, less rare, when, in the hardy and adventurous probation of infants, some accident attended with pain and injury occurred, Zee forsook her studies and her sports, and became the healer and the nurse. Her favourite flights were towards the extreme boundaries of the domain, where children were stationed on guard against

outbreaks of warring forces in nature, or the invasions of devouring animals, so that she might warn them of any peril which her knowledge detected or foresaw, or be at hand if any harm should befall. Nay, even in the exercise of her scientific acquirements there was a concurrent benevolence of purpose and will. Did she learn any novelty in invention that would be useful to the practitioner of some special art or craft? She hastened to communicate and explain it. Was some veteran sage of the College perplexed and wearied with the toil of an abstruse study? She would patiently devote herself to his aid, work out details for him, sustain his spirits with her hopeful smile, quicken his wit with her luminous suggestion, be to him, as it were, his own good genius made visible as the strengthener and inspirer. The same tenderness she exhibited to the inferior creatures. I have often known her bring home some sick and wounded animal, and tend and cherish it as a mother would tend and cherish her stricken child. Many a time when I sat in the balcony, or hanging garden, on which my window opened, I have watched her rising in the air on her radiant wings, and in a few moments groups of infants below, catching sight of her, would soar upward with joyous sounds of greeting; clustering and sporting around her, so that she seemed a very centre of innocent delight. When I have walked with her amidst the rocks and valleys without the city, the elk-deer would scent or see her from afar, come bounding up, eager for the caress of her hand, or follow her footsteps, till dismissed by some musical whisper that the creature had learned to comprehend. It is the fashion among the virgin Gy-ei to wear on their foreheads a circlet, or coronet, with gems resembling opals, arranged in four points or rays like stars. These are lustreless in ordinary use, but if touched by the vril wand they take a clear lambent flame, which illuminates, yet not burns. This serves as an ornament in their festivities, and as a lamp, if, in their wanderings beyond their artificial lights, they have to traverse the dark. There are times, when I have seen Zee's thoughtful majesty of face lighted up by this crowning halo, that I could scarcely believe her to be a creature of

mortal birth, and bent my head before her as the vision of a being among the celestial orders.

But never once did my heart feel for this lofty type of the noblest womanhood a sentiment of human love. Is it that, among the race I belong to, man's pride so far influences his passions that woman loses to him her special charm of woman if he feels her to be in all things eminently superior to himself? But by what strange infatuation could this peerless daughter of a race which, in the supremacy of its powers and the felicity of its conditions, ranked all other races in the category of barbarians, have deigned to honour me with her preference? In personal qualifications, though I passed for good-looking among the people I came from, the handsomest of my countrymen might have seemed insignificant and homely beside the grand and serene type of beauty which characterized the aspect of the Vrilya.

That novelty, the very difference between myself and those to whom Zee was accustomed, might serve to bias her fancy was probable enough, and as the reader will see later, such a cause might suffice to account for the predilection with which I was distinguished by a young Gy scarcely out of her childhood, and very inferior in all respects to Zee. But whoever will consider those tender characteristics which I have just ascribed to the daughter of Aph-Lin, may readily conceive that the main cause of my attraction to her was in her instinctive desire to cherish, to comfort, to protect, and, in protecting, to sustain and to exalt. Thus, when I look back, I account for the only weakness unworthy of her lofty nature, which bowed the daughter of the Vrilya to a woman's affection for one so inferior to herself as was her father's guest. But be the cause what it may, the consciousness that I had inspired such affection thrilled me with awe,—a moral awe of her very perfections, of her mysterious powers, of the inseparable distinctions between her race and my own; and with that awe, I must confess to my shame, there combined the more material and ignoble dread of the perils to which her preference would expose me.

Could it be supposed for a moment that the parents and

friends of this exalted being could view without indignation and disgust the possibility of an alliance between herself and a Tish? Her they could not punish, her they could not confine nor restrain. Neither in domestic nor in political life do they acknowledge any law of force amongst themselves; but they could effectually put an end to her infatuation by a flash of vril inflicted upon me.

Under these anxious circumstances, fortunately, my conscience and sense of honour were free from reproach. It became clearly my duty, if Zee's preference continued manifest, to intimate it to my host, with, of course, all the delicacy which is ever to be preserved by a well-bred man in confiding to another any degree of favour by which one of the fair sex may condescend to distinguish him. Thus, at all events, I should be freed from responsibility or suspicion of voluntary participation in the sentiments of Zee; and the superior wisdom of my host might probably suggest some sage extrication from my perilous dilemma. In this resolve I obeyed the ordinary instinct of civilized and moral man, who, erring though he be, still generally prefers the right course in those cases where it is obviously against his inclinations, his interests, and his safety to elect the wrong one.



CHAPTER XXII.

As the reader has seen, Aph-Lin had not favoured my general and unrestricted intercourse with his countrymen. Though relying on my promise to abstain from giving any information as to the world I had left, and still more on the promise of those to whom had been put the same request, not to question me, which Zee had exacted from Taë, yet he did not feel sure that, if I were allowed to mix with the strangers whose curiosity the sight of me had aroused, I could sufficiently guard myself against their inquiries. When I went out, therefore, it was never alone; I was always accompanied

either by one of my host's family, or my child-friend Tæ. Bra, Aph-Lin's wife, seldom stirred beyond the gardens which surrounded the house, and was fond of reading the ancient literature, which contained something of romance and adventure not to be found in the writings of recent ages, and presented pictures of a life unfamiliar to her experience and interesting to her imagination,—pictures, indeed, of a life more resembling that which we lead every day above-ground, coloured by our sorrows, sins, and passions, and much to her what the Tales of the Genii or the Arabian Nights are to us. But her love of reading did not prevent Bra from the discharge of her duties as mistress of the largest household in the city. She went daily the round of the chambers, and saw that the automata and other mechanical contrivances were in order, that the numerous children employed by Aph-Lin, whether in his private or public capacity, were carefully tended. Bra also inspected the accounts of the whole estate, and it was her great delight to assist her husband in the business connected with his office as chief administrator of the Lighting Department, so that her avocations necessarily kept her much within doors. The two sons were both completing their education at the College of Sages; and the elder, who had a strong passion for mechanics, and especially for works connected with the machinery of timepieces and automata, had decided on devoting himself to these pursuits, and was now occupied in constructing a shop, or warehouse, at which his inventions could be exhibited and sold. The younger son preferred farming and rural occupations; and when not attending the College, at which he chiefly studied the theories of agriculture, was much absorbed by his practical application of that science to his father's lands. It will be seen by this how completely equality of ranks is established among this people, a shopkeeper being of exactly the same grade in estimation as the large landed proprietor. Aph-Lin was the wealthiest member of the community, and his eldest son preferred keeping a shop to any other avocation; nor was this choice thought to show any want of elevated notions on his part.

This young man had been much interested in examining my watch, the works of which were new to him, and was greatly pleased when I made him a present of it. Shortly after, he returned the gift with interest, by a watch of his own construction, marking both the time as in my watch and the time as kept among the Vrilya. I have that watch still, and it has been much admired by many among the most eminent watchmakers of London and Paris. It is of gold, with diamond hands and figures, and it plays a favourite tune among the Vrilya in striking the hours; it only requires to be wound up once in ten months, and has never gone wrong since I had it. These young brothers being thus occupied, my usual companions in that family, when I went abroad, were my host or his daughter. Now, agreeably with the honourable conclusions I had come to, I began to excuse myself from Zee's invitations to go out alone with her, and seized an occasion when that learned Gy was delivering a lecture at the College of Sages to ask Aph-Lin to show me his country-seat. As this was at some little distance, and as Aph-Lin was not fond of walking, while I had discreetly relinquished all attempts at flying, we proceeded to our destination in one of the aerial boats belonging to my host. A child of eight years old, in his employ, was our conductor. My host and myself reclined on cushions, and I found the movement very easy and luxurious.

"Aph-Lin," said I, "you will not, I trust, be displeased with me, if I ask your permission to travel for a short time, and visit other tribes or communities of your illustrious race. I have also a strong desire to see those nations which do not adopt your institutions, and which you consider as savages. It would interest me greatly to notice what are the distinctions between them and the races whom we consider civilized in the world I have left."

"It is utterly impossible that you should go hence alone," said Aph-Lin. "Even among the Vrilya you would be exposed to great dangers. Certain peculiarities of formation and colour, and the extraordinary phenomenon of hirsute bushes upon your cheeks and chin, denoting in you a species

of An distinct alike from our race and any known race of barbarians yet extant, would attract, of course, the special attention of the College of Sages in whatever community of Vrilya you visited; and it would depend upon the individual temper of some individual sage whether you would be received, as you have been here, hospitably, or whether you would not be at once dissected for scientific purposes. Know that when the Tur first took you to his house, and while you were there put to sleep by Taë in order to recover from your previous pain or fatigue, the sages summoned by the Tur were divided in opinion whether you were a harmless or an obnoxious animal. During your unconscious state your teeth were examined, and they clearly showed that you were not only graminivorous, but carnivorous. Carnivorous animals of your size are always destroyed, as being of dangerous and savage nature. Our teeth, as you have doubtless observed,¹ are not those of the creatures who devour flesh. It is, indeed, maintained by Zee and other philosophers that as, in remote ages, the Ana did prey upon living beings of the brute species, their teeth must have been fitted for that purpose; but, even if so, they have been modified by hereditary transmission, and suited to the food on which we now exist; nor are even the barbarians, who adopt the turbulent and ferocious institutions of Glek-Nas, devourers of flesh like beasts of prey.

"In the course of this dispute it was proposed to dissect you; but Taë begged you off, and the Tur being, by office, averse to all novel experiments at variance with our custom of sparing life, except where it is clearly proved to be for the good of the community to take it, sent to me, whose business it is, as the richest man of the State, to afford hospitality to strangers from a distance. It was at my option to decide whether or not you were a stranger whom I could safely admit. Had I declined to receive you, you would have been handed over to the College of Sages, and what might there have befallen you I do not like to conjecture. Apart from

¹ I never had observed it; and, if I had, am not physiologist enough to have distinguished the difference.

this danger, you might chance to encounter some child of four years old, just put in possession of his vril staff; and who, in alarm at your strange appearance, and in the impulse of the moment, might reduce you to a cinder. Taë himself was about to do so when he first saw you, had his father not checked his hand. Therefore I say you cannot travel alone; but with Zee you would be safe, and I have no doubt that she would accompany you on a tour round the neighbouring communities of Vril-ya (to the savage States, No!). I will ask her."

Now, as my main object in proposing to travel was to escape from Zee, I hastily exclaimed, "Nay, pray do not! I relinquish my design. You have said enough as to its dangers to deter me from it; and I can scarcely think it right that a young Gy of the personal attractions of your lovely daughter should travel into other regions without a better protector than a Tish of my insignificant strength and stature."

Aph-Lin emitted the soft sibilant sound which is the nearest approach to laughter that a full-grown An permits to himself ere he replied: "Pardon my discourteous but momentary indulgence of mirth at any observation seriously made by my guest. I could not but be amused at the idea of Zee, who is so fond of protecting others that children call her 'THE GUARDIAN,' needing a protector herself against any dangers arising from the audacious admiration of males. Know that our Gy-ei, while unmarried, are accustomed to travel alone among other tribes, to see if they find there some An who may please them more than the Ana they find at home. Zee has already made three such journeys, but hitherto her heart has been untouched."

Here the opportunity which I sought was afforded to me, and I said, looking down, and with faltering voice, "Will you, my kind host, promise to pardon me, if what I am about to say gives you offence?"

"Say only the truth, and I cannot be offended; or, could I be so, it would be not for me, but for you to pardon."

"Well, then, assist me to quit you, and, much as I should

have liked to witness more of the wonders, and enjoy more of the felicity, which belong to your people, let me return to my own."

"I fear there are reasons why I cannot do that; at all events, not without permission of the Tur, and he probably would not grant it. You are not destitute of intelligence; you may (though I do not think so) have concealed the degree of destructive powers possessed by your people; you might, in short, bring upon us some danger; and if the Tur entertains that idea, it would clearly be his duty either to put an end to you, or enclose you in a cage for the rest of your existence. But why should you wish to leave a state of society which you so politely allow to be more felicitous than your own?"

"Oh, Aph-Lin! my answer is plain. Lest in aught, and unwittingly, I should betray your hospitality; lest, in that caprice of will which in our world is proverbial among the other sex, and from which even a Gy is not free, your adorable daughter should deign to regard me, though a Tish, as if I were a civilized An, and — and — and —"

"Court you as her spouse," put in Aph-Lin, gravely, and without any visible sign of surprise or displeasure.

"You have said it."

"That would be a misfortune," resumed my host, after a pause; "and I feel that you have acted as you ought in warning me. It is, as you imply, not uncommon for an unwedded Gy to conceive tastes as to the object she covets which appear whimsical to others; but there is no power to compel a young Gy to any course opposed to that which she chooses to pursue. All we can do is to reason with her, and experience tells us that the whole College of Sages would find it vain to reason with a Gy in a matter that concerns her choice in love. I grieve for you, because such a marriage would be against the Aglauran, or good of the community, for the children of such a marriage would adulterate the race: they might even come into the world with the teeth of carnivorous animals; this could not be allowed. Zee, as a Gy, cannot be controlled; but you, as a Tish, can be destroyed. I advise you, then, to resist her addresses; to tell her plainly that you can never

return her love. This happens constantly. Many an An, however ardently wooed by one Gy, rejects her, and puts an end to her persecution by wedding another. The same course is open to you."

"No; for I cannot wed another Gy without equally injuring the community, and exposing it to the chance of rearing carnivorous children."

"That is true. All I can say, and I say it with the tenderness due to a Tish, and the respect due to a guest, is frankly this,— if you yield, you will become a cinder. I must leave it to you to take the best way you can to defend yourself. Perhaps you had better tell Zee that she is ugly. That assurance on the lips of him she woos generally suffices to chill the most ardent Gy. Here we are at my country-house."

CHAPTER XXIII.

I CONFESS that my conversation with Aph-Lin, and the extreme coolness with which he stated his inability to control the dangerous caprice of his daughter, and treated the idea of the reduction into a cinder to which her amorous flame might expose my too seductive person, took away the pleasure I should otherwise have had in the contemplation of my host's country-seat, and the astonishing perfection of the machinery by which his farming operations were conducted. The house differed in appearance from the massive and sombre building which Aph-Lin inhabited in the city, and which seemed akin to the rocks out of which the city itself had been hewn into shape. The walls of the country-seat were composed by trees placed a few feet apart from each other, the interstices being filled in with the transparent metallic substance which serves the purpose of glass among the Ana. These trees were all in flower, and the effect was very pleasing, if not in the best taste. We were received at the porch by lifelike automata, who conducted us into a chamber, the like to which I never

saw before, but have often on summer days dreamily imagined. It was a bower,—half room, half garden. The walls were one mass of climbing flowers. The open spaces, which we call windows, and in which, here, the metallic surfaces were slid back, commanded various views,—some, of the wide landscape with its lakes and rocks; some, of small limited expanse answering to our conservatories, filled with tiers of flowers. Along the sides of the room were flower-beds, interspersed with cushions for repose. In the centre of the floor were a cistern and a fountain of that liquid light which I have presumed to be naphtha. It was luminous, and of a roseate hue; it sufficed without lamps to light up the room with a subdued radiance. All around the fountain was carpeted with a soft deep lichen, not green (I have never seen that colour in the vegetation of this country), but a quiet brown, on which the eye reposes with the same sense of relief as that with which in the upper world it reposes on green. In the outlets upon flowers (which I have compared to our conservatories) there were singing-birds innumerable, which, while we remained in the room, sang in those harmonies of tune to which they are, in these parts, so wonderfully trained. The roof was open. The whole scene had charms for every sense,—music from the birds, fragrance from the flowers, and varied beauty to the eye at every aspect. About all was a voluptuous repose. What a place, methought, for a honeymoon, if a Gy bride were a little less formidably armed not only with the rights of woman, but with the powers of man! but when one thinks of a Gy so learned, so tall, so stately, so much above the standard of the creature we call woman, as was Zee,—no! even if I had felt no fear of being reduced to a cinder, it is not of her I should have dreamed in that bower so constructed for dreams of poetic love.

The automata reappeared, serving one of those delicious liquids which form the innocent wines of the Vrilya.

"Truly," said I, "this is a charming residence, and I can scarcely conceive why you do not settle yourself here instead of amid the gloomier abodes of the city."

"As responsible to the community for the administration

of light, I am compelled to reside chiefly in the city, and can only come hither for short intervals."

"But since I understand from you that no honours are attached to your office, and it involves some trouble, why do you accept it?"

"Each of us obeys without question the command of the Tur. He said, 'Be it requested that Aph-Lin shall be Commissioner of Light,' so I had no choice; but having held the office now for a long time, the cares, which were at first unwelcome, have become, if not pleasing, at least endurable. We are all formed by custom,—even the difference of our race from the savage is but the transmitted continuance of custom, which becomes, through hereditary descent, part and parcel of our nature. You see there are Ana who even reconcile themselves to the responsibilities of chief magistrate; but no one would do so if his duties had not been rendered so light, or if there were any questions as to compliance with his requests."

"Not even if you thought the requests unwise or unjust?"

"We do not allow ourselves to think so; and indeed, everything goes on as if each and all governed themselves according to immemorial custom."

"When the chief magistrate dies or retires, how do you provide for his successor?"

"The An who has discharged the duties of chief magistrate for many years is the best person to choose one by whom those duties may be understood, and he generally names his successor."

"His son, perhaps?"

"Seldom that; for it is not an office any one desires or seeks, and a father naturally hesitates to constrain his son. But if the Tur himself decline to make a choice, for fear it might be supposed that he owed some grudge to the person on whom his choice would settle, then there are three of the College of Sages who draw lots among themselves which shall have the power to elect the chief. We consider that the judgment of one An of ordinary capacity is better than the judgment of three or more, however wise they may be; for among

three there would probably be disputes, and where there are disputes, passion clouds judgment. The worst choice made by one who has no motive in choosing wrong, is better than the best choice made by many who have many motives for not choosing right."

"You reverse in your policy the maxims adopted in my country."

"Are you all, in your country, satisfied with your governors?"

"All! certainly not; the governors that most please some are sure to be those most displeasing to others."

"Then our system is better than yours."

"For you it may be; but according to our system a Tish could not be reduced to a cinder if a female compelled him to marry her; and as a Tish I sigh to return to my native world."

"Take courage, my dear little guest; Zee can't compel you to marry her,—she can only entice you to do so. Don't be enticed. Come and look round my domain."

We went forth into a close, bordered with sheds; for though the Ana keep no stock for food, there are some animals which they rear for milking and others for shearing. The former have no resemblance to our cows, nor the latter to our sheep, nor do I believe such species exist amongst them. They use the milk of three varieties of animal: one resembles the antelope, but is much larger, being as tall as a camel; the other two are smaller, and, though differing somewhat from each other, resemble no creature I ever saw on earth. They are very sleek and of rounded proportions; their colour that of the dappled deer, with very mild countenances and beautiful dark eyes. The milk of these three creatures differs in richness and in taste. It is usually diluted with water, and flavoured with the juice of a peculiar and perfumed fruit, and in itself is very nutritious and palatable. The animal whose fleece serves them for clothing and many other purposes is more like the Italian she-goat than any other creature, but is considerably larger, has no horns, and is free from the displeasing odour of our goats. Its fleece is not thick, but very

long and fine; it varies in colour, but is never white, more generally of a slate-like or lavender hue. For clothing it is usually worn dyed to suit the taste of the wearer. These animals were exceedingly tame, and were treated with extraordinary care and affection by the children (chiefly female) who tended them.

We then went through vast storehouses filled with grains and fruits. I may here observe that the main staple of food among these people consists, firstly, of a kind of corn much larger in ear than our wheat, and which by culture is perpetually being brought into new varieties of flavour; and, secondly, of a fruit of about the size of a small orange, which, when gathered, is hard and bitter. It is stowed away for many months in their warehouses, and then becomes succulent and tender. Its juice, which is of dark-red colour, enters into most of their sauces. They have many kinds of fruit of the nature of the olive, from which delicious oils are extracted. They have a plant somewhat resembling the sugarcane, but its juices are less sweet and of a delicate perfume. They have no bees nor honey-kneading insects, but they make much use of a sweet gum that oozes from a coniferous plant, not unlike the araucaria. Their soil teems also with esculent roots and vegetables, which it is the aim of their culture to improve and vary to the utmost. And I never remember any meal among this people, however it might be confined to the family household, in which some delicate novelty in such articles of food was not introduced. In fine, as I before observed, their cookery is exquisite, so diversified and nutritious that one does not miss animal food; and their own physical forms suffice to show that with them, at least, meat is not required for superior production of muscular fibre. They have no grapes,—the drinks extracted from their fruits are innocent and refreshing. Their staple beverage, however, is water, in the choice of which they are very fastidious, distinguishing at once the slightest impurity.

"My younger son takes great pleasure in augmenting our produce," said Aph-Lin, as we passed through the storehouses, "and therefore will inherit these lands, which con

stitute the chief part of my wealth. To my elder son such inheritance would be a great trouble and affliction."

"Are there many sons among you who think the inheritance of vast wealth would be a great trouble and affliction?"

"Certainly; there are indeed very few of the Vrilya who do not consider that a fortune much above the average is a heavy burden. We are rather a lazy people after the age of childhood, and do not like undergoing more cares than we can help, and great wealth does give its owner many cares. For instance, it marks us out for public offices, which none of us like and none of us can refuse. It necessitates our taking a continued interest in the affairs of any of our poorer countrymen, so that we may anticipate their wants and see that none fall into poverty. There is an old proverb amongst us which says, 'The poor man's need is the rich man's shame—'"

"Pardon me, if I interrupt you for a moment. You then allow that some, even of the Vrilya, know want, and need relief?"

"If by want you mean the destitution that prevails in a Koom-Posh, *that* is impossible with us, unless an An has, by some extraordinary process, got rid of all his means, cannot or will not emigrate, and has either tired out the affectionate aid of his relations or personal friends, or refuses to accept it."

"Well, then, does he not supply the place of an infant or automaton, and become a labourer, a servant?"

"No; then we regard him as an unfortunate person of unsound reason, and place him, at the expense of the State, in a public building, where every comfort and every luxury that can mitigate his affliction are lavished upon him. But an An does not like to be considered out of his mind, and therefore such cases occur so seldom that the public building I speak of is now a deserted ruin, and the last inmate of it was an An whom I recollect to have seen in my childhood. He did not seem conscious of loss of reason, and wrote glaubs (poetry). When I spoke of wants, I meant such wants as an An with desires larger than his means sometimes entertains,—for expensive singing-birds, or bigger houses, or country-gardens;

and the obvious way to satisfy such wants is to buy of him something that he sells. Hence Ana like myself, who are very rich, are obliged to buy a great many things they do not require, and live on a very large scale where they might prefer to live on a small one. For instance, the great size of my house in the town is a source of much trouble to my wife, and even to myself; but I am compelled to have it thus incommodiously large, because, as the richest An of the community, I am appointed to entertain the strangers from the other communities when they visit us, which they do in great crowds twice a year, when certain periodical entertainments are held, and when relations scattered throughout all the realms of the Vrilya joyfully reunite for a time. This hospitality, on a scale so extensive, is not to my taste, and therefore I should have been happier had I been less rich. But we must all bear the lot assigned to us in this short passage through time that we call life. After all, what are a hundred years, more or less, to the ages through which we must pass hereafter? Luckily, I have one son who likes great wealth. It is a rare exception to the general rule, and I own I cannot myself understand it."

After this conversation I sought to return to the subject which continued to weigh on my heart,—namely, the chances of escape from Zee; but my host politely declined to renew that topic, and summoned our air-boat. On our way back we were met by Zee, who, having found us gone, on her return from the College of Sages, had unfurled her wings and flown in search of us.

Her grand, but to me unalluring, countenance brightened as she beheld me, and poising herself beside the boat on her large outspread plumes, she said reproachfully to Aph-Lin, "Oh, Father, was it right in you to hazard the life of your guest in a vehicle to which he is so unaccustomed? He might, by an incautious movement, fall over the side; and, alas! he is not like us,—he has no wings. It were death to him to fall. — Dear one!" she added, accosting my shrinking self in a softer voice, "have you no thought of me, that you should thus hazard a life which has become almost a part of

mine? Never again be thus rash, unless I am thy companion. What terror thou hast stricken into me!"

I glanced furtively at Aph-Lin, expecting, at least, that he would indignantly reprove his daughter for expressions of anxiety and affection, which, under all the circumstances, would, in the world above ground, be considered immodest in the lips of a young female, addressed to a male not affianced to her, even if of the same rank as herself.

But so confirmed are the rights of females in that region, and so absolutely foremost among those rights do females claim the privilege of courtship, that Aph-Lin would no more have thought of reproving his virgin daughter than he would have thought of disobeying the Tur. In that country, custom, as he implied, is all and all.

He answered mildly, "Zee, the Tish was in no danger, and it is my belief that he can take very good care of himself."

"I would rather that he let me charge myself with his care. O heart of my heart, it was in the thought of thy danger that I first felt how much I loved thee!"

Never did man feel in so false a position as I did. These words were spoken aloud in the hearing of Zee's father, in the hearing of the child who steered. I blushed with shame for them, and for her, and could not help replying angrily: "Zee, either you mock me, which, as your father's guest, misbecomes you, or the words you utter are improper for a maiden Gy to address even to an An of her own race, if he has not wooed her with the consent of her parents. How much more improper to address them to a Tish, who has never presumed to solicit your affections, and who can never regard you with other sentiments than those of reverence and awe!"

Aph-Lin made me a covert sign of approbation, but said nothing.

"Be not so cruel!" exclaimed Zee, still in sonorous accents. "Can love command itself where it is truly felt? Do you suppose that a maiden Gy will conceal a sentiment that it elevates her to feel? What a country you must have come from!"

Here Aph-Lin gently interposed, saying, "Among the Tish-a the rights of your sex do not appear to be established; and at all events my guest may converse with you more freely if unchecked by the presence of others."

To this remark Zee made no reply, but, darting on me a tender reproachful glance, agitated her wings and fled homeward.

"I had counted, at least, on some aid from my host," said I, bitterly, "in the perils to which his own daughter exposes me."

"I gave you the best aid I could. To contradict a Gy in her love affairs is to confirm her purpose. She allows no counsel to come between her and her affections."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON alighting from the air-boat, a child accosted Aph-Lin in the hall with a request that he would be present at the funeral obsequies of a relation who had recently departed from that nether world.

Now, I had never seen a burial-place or cemetery amongst this people, and, glad to seize even so melancholy an occasion to defer an encounter with Zee, I asked Aph-Lin if I might be permitted to witness with him the interment of his relation; unless, indeed, it were regarded as one of those sacred ceremonies to which a stranger to their race might not be admitted.

"The departure of an An to a happier world," answered my host, "when, as in the case of my kinsman, he has lived so long in this as to have lost pleasure in it, is rather a cheerful though quiet festival than a sacred ceremony, and you may accompany me if you will."

Preceded by the child-messenger, we walked up the main street to a house at some little distance, and, entering the hall, were conducted to a room on the ground-floor, where we

found several persons assembled round a couch on which was laid the deceased. It was an old man, who had, as I was told, lived beyond his one hundred and thirtieth year. To judge by the calm smile on his countenance, he had passed away without suffering. One of the sons, who was now the head of the family, and who seemed in vigorous middle life, though he was considerably more than seventy, stepped forward with a cheerful face and told Aph-Lin that the day before he died his father had seen in a dream his departed Gy, and was eager to be reunited to her, and restored to youth beneath the nearer smile of the All-Good.

While these two were talking, my attention was drawn to a dark metallic substance at the farther end of the room. It was about twenty feet in length, narrow in proportion, and all closed round, save, near the roof, there were small round holes through which might be seen a red light. From the interior emanated a rich and sweet perfume; and while I was conjecturing what purpose this machine was to serve, all the timepieces in the town struck the hour with their solemn musical chime; and as that sound ceased, music of a more joyous character, but still of a joy subdued and tranquil, rang throughout the chamber, and from the walls beyond, in a choral peal. Symphonious with the melody, those present lifted their voice in chant. The words of this hymn were simple. They expressed no regret, no farewell, but rather a greeting to the new world whither the deceased had preceded the living. Indeed, in their language, the funeral hymn is called the "Birth Song." Then the corpse, covered by a long cerement, was tenderly lifted up by six of the nearest kinsfolk, and borne towards the dark thing I have described. I pressed forward to see what happened. A sliding door or panel at one end was lifted up, the body deposited within, on a shelf, the door reclosed, a spring at the side touched, a sudden *whishing*, sighing sound heard from within; and lo! at the other end of the machine the lid fell down, and a small handful of smouldering dust dropped into a *patera* placed to receive it. The son took up the *patera* and said (in what I understood afterwards was the usual form of

words), "Behold how great is the Maker! To this little dust He gave form and life and soul. It needs not this little dust for Him to renew form and life and soul to the beloved one we shall soon see again."

Each present bowed his head and pressed his hand to his heart. Then a young female child opened a small door within the wall, and I perceived, in the recess, shelves on which were placed many *pateræ* like that which the son held, save that they all had covers. With such a cover a Gy now approached the son, and placed it over the cup, on which it closed with a spring. On the lid were engraven the name of the deceased, and these words: "Lent to us" (here the date of birth). "Recalled from us" (here the date of death).

The closed door shut with a musical sound, and all was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

"AND this," said I, with my mind full of what I had witnessed,— "this, I presume, is your usual form of burial?"

"Our invariable form," answered Aph-Lin. "What is it amongst your people?"

"We inter the body whole within the earth."

"What! to degrade the form you have loved and honoured, the wife on whose breast you have slept, to the loathsomeness of corruption?"

"But if the soul lives again, can it matter whether the body waste within the earth or is reduced by that awful mechanism, worked, no doubt by the agency of vril, into a pinch of dust?"

"You answer well," said my host, "and there is no arguing on a matter of feeling; but to me your custom is horrible and repulsive, and would serve to invest death with gloomy and hideous associations. It is something, too, to my mind, to be able to preserve the token of what has been our kinsman or friend within the abode in which we live. We thus feel more

sensibly that he still lives, though not visibly so to us. But our sentiments in this, as in all things, are created by custom. Custom is not to be changed by a wise An, any more than it is changed by a wise Community, without the gravest deliberation, followed by the most earnest conviction. It is only thus that change ceases to be changeability, and once made is made for good."

When we regained the house, Aph-Lin summoned some of the children in his service and sent them round to several of his friends, requesting their attendance that day, during the Easy Hours, to a festival in honour of his kinsman's recall to the All-Good. This was the largest and gayest assembly I ever witnessed during my stay among the Ana, and was prolonged far into the Silent Hours.

The banquet was spread in a vast chamber reserved especially for grand occasions. This differed from our entertainments, and was not without a certain resemblance to those we read of in the luxurious age of the Roman empire. There was not one great table set out, but numerous small tables, each appropriated to eight guests. It is considered that beyond that number conversation languishes and friendship cools. The Ana never laugh loud, as I have before observed, but the cheerful ring of their voices at the various tables betokened gayety of intercourse. As they have no stimulant drinks, and are temperate in food, though so choice and dainty, the banquet itself did not last long. The tables sank through the floor, and then came musical entertainments for those who liked them. Many, however, wandered away: some of the younger ascended on their wings, for the hall was roofless, forming aerial dances; others strolled through the various apartments, examining the curiosities with which they were stored, or formed themselves into groups for various games, the favourite of which is a complicated kind of chess played by eight persons. I mixed with the crowd, but was prevented joining in their conversation by the constant companionship of one or the other of my host's sons, appointed to keep me from obtrusive questionings. The guests, however, noticed me but slightly; they had grown accustomed to

my appearance, seeing me so often in the streets, and I had ceased to excite much curiosity.

To my great delight Zee avoided me, and evidently sought to excite my jealousy by marked attentions to a very handsome young An, who (though, as is the modest custom of the males when addressed by females, he answered with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, and was demure and shy as young ladies new to the world are in most civilized countries, except England and America) was evidently much charmed by the tall Gy, and ready to falter a bashful "Yes" if she had actually proposed. Fervently hoping that she would, and more and more averse to the idea of reduction to a cinder after I had seen the rapidity with which a human body can be hurried into a pinch of dust, I amused myself by watching the manners of the other young people. I had the satisfaction of observing that Zee was no singular asserter of a female's most valued rights. Wherever I turned my eyes, or lent my ears, it seemed to me that the Gy was the wooing party, and the An the coy and reluctant one. The pretty innocent airs which an An gave himself on being thus courted, the dexterity with which he evaded direct answer to professions of attachment, or turned into jest the flattering compliments addressed to him, would have done honour to the most accomplished coquette. Both my male *chaperons* were subjected greatly to these seductive influences, and both acquitted themselves with wonderful honour to their tact and self-control.

I said to the elder son, who preferred mechanical employments to the management of a great property, and who was of an eminently philosophical temperament, "I find it difficult to conceive how at your age, and with all the intoxicating effects on the senses, of music and lights and perfumes, you can be so cold to that impassioned Gy who has just left you with tears in her eyes at your cruelty."

The young An replied with a sigh, "Gentle Tish, the greatest misfortune in life is to marry one Gy if you are in love with another."

"Oh, you are in love with another?"

"Alas! yes."

"And she does not return your love?"

"I don't know. Sometimes a look, a tone, makes me hope so; but she has never plainly told me that she loves me."

"Have you not whispered in her own ear that you love her?"

"Fie! what are you thinking of? What world do you come from? Could I so betray the dignity of my sex? Could I be so un-Anly, so lost to shame, as to own love to a Gy who has not first owned hers to me?"

"Pardon; I was not quite aware that you pushed the modesty of your sex so far. But does no An ever say to a Gy, 'I love you,' till she says it first to him?"

"I can't say that no An has ever done so, but if he ever does, he is disgraced in the eyes of the Ana, and secretly despised by the Gy-ei. No Gy, well brought up, would listen to him; she would consider that he audaciously infringed on the rights of her sex, while outraging the modesty which dignifies his own. It is very provoking," continued the An, "for she whom I love has certainly courted no one else, and I cannot but think she likes me. Sometimes I suspect that she does not court me because she fears I would ask some unreasonable settlement as to the surrender of her rights; but if so, she cannot really love me, for where a Gy really loves she foregoes all rights."

"Is this young Gy present?"

"Oh, yes. She sits yonder talking to my mother."

I looked in the direction to which my eyes were thus guided, and saw a Gy dressed in robes of bright red, which among this people is a sign that a Gy as yet prefers a single state. She wears gray, a neutral tint, to indicate that she is looking about for a spouse; dark purple if she wishes to intimate that she has made a choice; purple and orange when she is betrothed or married; light blue when she is divorced or a widow and would marry again. Light blue is of course seldom seen.

Among a people where all are of so high a type of beauty, it is difficult to single out one as peculiarly handsome. My

young friend's choice seemed to me to possess the average of good looks; but there was an expression in her face that pleased me more than did the faces of the young Gy-ei generally, because it looked less bold, less conscious of female rights. I observed that, while she talked to Bra, she glanced, from time to time, sidelong at my young friend.

"Courage," said I; "that young Gy loves you."

"Ay, but if she will not say so, how am I the better for her love."

"Your mother is aware of your attachment?"

"Perhaps so. I never owned it to her. It would be un-
Anly to confide such weakness to a mother. I have told my father; he may have told it again to his wife."

"Will you permit me to quit you for a moment and glide behind your mother and your beloved? I am sure they are talking about you. Do not hesitate. I promise that I will not allow myself to be questioned till I rejoin you."

The young An pressed his hand on his heart, touched me lightly on the head, and allowed me to quit his side. I stole unobserved behind his mother and his beloved. I overheard their talk.

Bra was speaking; said she, "There can be no doubt of this: either my son, who is of marriageable age, will be decoyed into marriage with one of his many suitors, or he will join those who emigrate to a distance and we shall see him no more. If you really care for him, my dear Lo, you should propose."

"I do care for him, Bra; but I doubt if I could really ever win his affections. He is fond of his inventions and timepieces; and I am not like Zee, but so dull that I fear I could not enter into his favourite pursuits, and then he would get tired of me, and at the end of three years divorce me, and I could never marry another,—never!"

"It is not necessary to know about timepieces to know how to be so necessary to the happiness of an An who cares for timepieces that he would rather give up the timepieces than divorce his Gy. You see, my dear Lo," continued Bra, "that precisely because we are the stronger sex, we rule the other,

provided we never show our strength. If you were superior to my son in making timepieces and automata, you should, as his wife, always let him suppose you thought him superior in that art to yourself. The An tacitly allows the pre-eminence of the Gy in all except his own special pursuit. But if she either excels him in that, or affects not to admire him for his proficiency in it, he will not love her very long; perhaps he may even divorce her. But where a Gy really loves, she soon learns to love all that the An does."

The young Gy made no answer to this address. She looked down musingly, then a smile crept over her lips, and she rose, still silent, and went through the crowd till she paused by the young An who loved her. I followed her steps, but discreetly stood at a little distance while I watched them. Somewhat to my surprise, till I recollected the coy tactics among the Ana, the lover seemed to receive her advances with an air of indifference. He even moved away; but she pursued his steps, and, a little time after, both spread their wings and vanished amid the luminous space above.

Just then I was accosted by the chief magistrate, who mingled with the crowd distinguished by no signs of deference or homage. It so happened that I had not seen this great dignitary since the day I had entered his dominions; and recalling Aph-Lin's words as to his terrible doubt whether or not I should be dissected, a shudder crept over me at the sight of his tranquil countenance.

"I hear much of you, stranger, from my son Taë," said the Tur, laying his hand politely on my bended head. "He is very fond of your society, and I trust you are not displeased with the customs of our people."

I muttered some unintelligible answer, which I intended to be an assurance of my gratitude for the kindness I had received from the Tur, and my admiration of his countrymen, but the dissecting-knife gleamed before my mind's eye and choked my utterance. A softer voice said, "My brother's friend must be dear to me;" and looking up I saw a young Gy, who might be sixteen years old, standing beside the magistrate and gazing at me with a very benignant countenance.

She had not come to her full growth, and was scarcely taller than myself (namely, about five feet, ten inches), and, thanks to that comparatively diminutive stature, I thought her the loveliest Gy I had hitherto seen. I suppose something in my eyes revealed that impression, for her countenance grew yet more benignant.

"Taë tells me," she said, "that you have not yet learned to accustom yourself to wings. That grieves me, for I should have liked to fly with you."

"Alas!" I replied, "I can never hope to enjoy that happiness. I am assured by Zee that the safe use of wings is a hereditary gift, and it would take generations before one of my race could poise himself in the air like a bird."

"Let not that thought vex you too much," replied this amiable princess, "for, after all, there must come a day when Zee and myself must resign our wings forever. Perhaps when that day comes we might be glad if the An we chose was also without wings."

The Tur had left us, and was lost amongst the crowd. I began to feel at ease with Taë's charming sister, and rather startled her by the boldness of my compliment in replying "that no An she could choose would ever use his wings to fly away from her." It is so against custom for an An to say such civil things to a Gy till she has declared her passion for him, and been accepted as his betrothed, that the young maiden stood quite dumfounded for a few moments. Nevertheless she did not seem displeased. At last recovering herself, she invited me to accompany her into one of the less crowded rooms and listen to the songs of the birds. I followed her steps as she glided before me, and she led me into a chamber almost deserted. A fountain of naphtha was playing in the centre of the room; round it were ranged soft divans, and the walls of the room were open on one side to an aviary in which the birds were chanting their artful chorus. The Gy seated herself on one of the divans, and I placed myself at her side. "Taë tells me," she said, "that Aph-Lin has made it the law¹

¹ Literally "has said, In this house be it requested." Words synonymous with law, as implying forcible obligation, are avoided by this singular people.

of his house that you are not to be questioned as to the country you come from or the reason why you visit us. Is it so?"

"It is."

"May I, at least, without sinning against that law, ask at least if the Gy-ei in your country are of the same pale colour as yourself, and no taller?"

"I do not think, O beautiful Gy, that I infringe the law of Aph-Lin, which is more binding on myself than any one, if I answer questions so innocent. The Gy-ei in my country are much fairer of hue than I am, and their average height is at least a head shorter than mine."

"They cannot then be so strong as the Ana amongst you? But I suppose their superior vril force makes up for such extraordinary disadvantage of size?"

"They do not profess the vril force as you know it. But still they are very powerful in my country, and an An has small chance of a happy life if he be not more or less governed by his Gy."

"You speak feelingly," said Taë's sister, in a tone of voice half sad, half petulant. "You are married, of course?"

"No, certainly not."

"Nor betrothed?"

"Nor betrothed."

"Is it possible that no Gy has proposed to you?"

"In my country the Gy does not propose; the An speaks first."

"What a strange reversal of the laws of nature!" said the maiden, "and what want of modesty in your sex! But have you never proposed, never loved one Gy more than another?"

I felt embarrassed by these ingenuous questionings, and said, "Pardon me, but I think we are beginning to infringe upon Aph-Lin's injunction. Thus much only will I say in answer, and then, I implore you, ask no more. I did once

Even had it been decreed by the Tur that his College of Sages should dissect me, the decree would have ran blandly thus: "Be it requested that, for the good of the community, the carnivorous Tish be requested to submit himself to dissection."

feel the preference you speak of; I did propose, and the Gy would willingly have accepted me, but her parents refused their consent."

"Parents! Do you mean seriously to tell me that parents can interfere with the choice of their daughters?"

"Indeed they can, and do very often."

"I should not like to live in that country," said the Gy, simply; "but I hope you will never go back to it."

I bowed my head in silence. The Gy gently raised my face with her right hand, and looked into it tenderly. "Stay with us," she said; "stay with us, and be loved."

What I might have answered, what dangers of becoming a cinder I might have encountered, I still tremble to think, when the light of the naphtha fountain was obscured by the shadow of wings; and Zee, flying through the open roof, alighted beside us. She said not a word, but, taking my arm with her mighty hand, she drew me away, as a mother draws a naughty child, and led me through the apartments to one of the corridors, on which, by the mechanism they generally prefer to stairs, we ascended to my own room. This gained, Zee breathed on my forehead, touched my breast with her staff, and I was instantly plunged into a profound sleep.

When I awoke some hours later, and heard the song of the birds in the adjoining aviary, the remembrance of Taë's sister, her gentle looks and caressing words, vividly returned to me; and so impossible is it for one born and reared in our upper world's state of society to divest himself of ideas dictated by vanity and ambition, that I found myself instinctively building proud castles in the air.

"Tish though I be," thus ran my meditations,— "Tish though I be, it is then clear that Zee is not the only Gy whom my appearance can captivate. Evidently I am loved by A PRINCESS, the first maiden of this land, the daughter of the absolute Monarch whose autocracy they so idly seek to disguise by the republican title of 'chief magistrate.' But for the sudden swoop of that horrible Zee, this Royal Lady would have formally proposed to me; and though it may be very

well for Aph-Lin, who is only a subordinate minister, a mere Commissioner of Light, to threaten me with destruction if I accept his daughter's hand, yet a Sovereign, whose word is law, could compel the community to abrogate any custom that forbids intermarriage with one of a strange race, and which in itself is a contradiction to their boasted equality of ranks.

"It is not to be supposed that his daughter, who spoke with such incredulous scorn of the interference of parents, would not have sufficient influence with her Royal Father to save me from the combustion to which Aph-Lin would condemn my form. And if I were exalted by such an alliance, who knows but what the Monarch might elect me as his successor? Why not? Few among this indolent race of philosophers like the burden of such greatness. All might be pleased to see the supreme power lodged in the hands of an accomplished stranger who has experience of other and livelier forms of existence; and, once chosen, what reforms I would institute! What additions to the really pleasant but too monotonous life of this realm my familiarity with the civilized nations above ground would effect! I am fond of the sports of the field. Next to war, is not the chase a king's pastime? In what varieties of strange game does this nether world abound! How interesting to strike down creatures that were known above ground before the Deluge! But how? By that terrible vril, in which, from want of hereditary transmission, I could never be a proficient? No, but by a civilized handy breech-loader, which these ingenious mechanics could not only make, but no doubt improve; nay, surely I saw one in the Museum. Indeed, as absolute king, I should discountenance vril altogether, except in cases of war. *À propos* of war, it is perfectly absurd to stint a people so intelligent, so rich, so well armed, to a petty limit of territory sufficing for ten thousand or twelve thousand families. Is not this restriction a mere philosophical crotchet, at variance with the aspiring element in human nature, such as has been partially, and with complete failure, tried in the upper world by the late Mr. Robert Owen. Of course one would

not go to war with neighbouring nations as well armed as one's own subjects; but then, what of those regions inhabited by races unacquainted with vril, and apparently resembling, in their democratic institutions, my American countrymen? One might invade them without offence to the vril nations, our allies, appropriate their territories, extending, perhaps, to the most distant regions of the nether earth, and thus rule over an empire in which the sun never sets. (I forgot, in my enthusiasm, that over those regions there was no sun to set.) As for the fantastical notion against conceding fame or renown to an eminent individual, because, forsooth, bestowal of honours insures contest in the pursuit of them, stimulates angry passions, and mars the felicity of peace,—it is opposed to the very elements, not only of the human but the brute creation, which are all, if tamable, participators in the sentiment of praise and emulation. What renown would be given to a king who thus extended his empire! I should be deemed a demigod." Thinking of that, the other fanatical notion of regulating this life by reference to one which, no doubt, we Christians firmly believe in, but never take into consideration, I resolved that enlightened philosophy compelled me to abolish a heathen religion so superstitiously at variance with modern thought and practical action. Musing over these various projects, I felt how much I should have liked at that moment to brighten my wits by a good glass of whiskey-and-water. Not that I am habitually a spirit-drinker, but certainly there are times when a little stimulant of alcoholic nature, taken with a cigar, enlivens the imagination. Yes; certainly among these herbs and fruits there would be a liquid from which one could extract a pleasant vinous alcohol; and with a steak cut off one of those elks (ah, what offence to science to reject the animal food which our first medical men agree in recommending to the gastric juices of mankind!) one would certainly pass a more exhilarating hour of repast. Then, too, instead of those antiquated dramas performed by childish amateurs, certainly when I am king, I will introduce our modern opera and a *corps de ballet*, for which one might find, among the nations I shall conquer, young females of less

formidable height and thews than the Gy-ei,—not armed with vril, and not insisting upon one's marrying them.

I was so completely wrapped in these and similar reforms, political, social, and moral, calculated to bestow on the people of the nether world the blessings of a civilization known to the races of the upper, that I did not perceive that Zee had entered the chamber till I heard a deep sigh, and raising my eyes, beheld her standing by my couch.

I need not say that, according to the manners of this people, a Gy can, without indecorum, visit an An in his chamber, though an An would be considered forward and immodest to the last degree if he entered the chamber of a Gy without previously obtaining her permission to do so. Fortunately I was in the full habiliments I had worn when Zee had deposited me on the couch. Nevertheless I felt much irritated, as well as shocked, by her visit, and asked in a rude tone what she wanted.

"Speak gently, beloved one, I entreat you," said she, "for I am very unhappy. I have not slept since we parted."

"A due sense of your shameful conduct to me as your father's guest might well suffice to banish sleep from your eyelids. Where was the affection you pretend to have for me, where was even that politeness on which the Vrilya pride themselves, when, taking advantage alike of that physical strength in which your sex, in this extraordinary region, excels our own, and of those detestable and unhallowed powers which the agencies of vril invest in your eyes and finger-ends, you exposed me to humiliation before your assembled visitors, before Her Royal Highness,—I mean, the daughter of your own chief magistrate,—carrying me off to bed like a naughty infant, and plunging me into sleep, without asking my consent?"

"Ungrateful! Do you reproach me for the evidences of my love? Can you think that, even if unstrung by the jealousy which attends upon love till it fades away in blissful trust when we know that the heart we have wooed is won, I could be indifferent to the perils to which the audacious overtures of that silly little child might expose you?"

"Hold! Since you introduce the subject of perils, it perhaps does not misbecome me to say that my most imminent perils come from yourself, or at least would come if I believed in your love and accepted your addresses. Your father has told me plainly that in that case I should be consumed into a cinder with as little compunction as if I were the reptile whom Taë blasted into ashes with the flash of his wand."

"Do not let that fear chill your heart to me," exclaimed Zee, dropping on her knees and absorbing my right hand in the space of her ample palm. "It is true, indeed, that we two cannot wed as those of the same race wed; true that the love between us must be pure as that which, in our belief, exists between lovers who reunite in the new life beyond that boundary at which the old life ends. But is it not happiness enough to be together, wedded in mind and in heart? Listen: I have just left my father. He consents to our union on those terms. I have sufficient influence with the College of Sages to insure their request to the Tur not to interfere with the free choice of a Gy, provided that her wedding with one of another race be but the wedding of souls. Oh, think you that true love needs ignoble union? It is not that I yearn only to be by your side in this life, to be part and parcel of your joys and sorrows here: I ask here for a tie which will bind us forever and forever in the world of immortals. Do you reject me?"

As she spoke, she knelt, and the whole character of her face was changed,—nothing of sternness left to its grandeur; a divine light, as that of an immortal, shining out from its human beauty. But she rather awed me as angel than moved me as woman, and after an embarrassed pause, I faltered forth evasive expressions of gratitude, and sought, as delicately as I could, to point out how humiliating would be my position amongst her race in the light of a husband who might never be permitted the name of father.

"But," said Zee, "this community does not constitute the whole world. No; nor do all the populations comprised in the league of the Vril-ya. For thy sake I will renounce my

country and my people. We will fly together to some region where thou shalt be safe. I am strong enough to bear thee on my wings across the deserts that intervene. I am skilled enough to cleave open, amid the rocks, valleys in which to build our home. Solitude and a hut with thee would be to me society and the universe. Or wouldst thou return to thine own world, above the surface of this, exposed to the uncertain seasons, and lit but by the changeful orbs which constitute by thy description the fickle character of those savage regions? If so, speak the word, and I will force the way for thy return, so that I am thy companion there, though, there as here, but partner of thy soul, and fellow-traveller with thee to the world in which there is no parting and no death."

I could not but be deeply affected by the tenderness, at once so pure and so impassioned, with which these words were uttered, and in a voice that would have rendered musical the roughest sounds in the rudest tongue. And for a moment it did occur to me that I might avail myself of Zee's agency to affect a safe and speedy return to the upper world. But a very brief space for reflection sufficed to show me how dishonourable and base a return for such devotion it would be to allure thus away, from her own people and a home in which I had been so hospitably treated, a creature to whom our world would be so abhorrent, and for whose barren, if spiritual love, I could not reconcile myself to renounce the more human affection of mates less exalted above my erring self. With this sentiment of duty towards the Gy combined another of duty towards the whole race I belonged to. Could I venture to introduce into the upper world a being so formidably gifted,—a being that with a movement of her staff could in less than an hour reduce New York and its glorious Koom-Posh into a pinch of snuff? Rob her of one staff, with her science she could easily construct another; and with the deadly lightnings that armed the slender engine her whole frame was charged. If thus dangerous to the cities and populations of the whole upper earth, could she be a safe companion to myself in case her affection should be subjected to change or embittered by jealousy? These thoughts, which it

takes so many words to express, passed rapidly through my brain and decided my answer.

"Zee," I said, in the softest tones I could command, and pressing respectful lips on the hand into whose clasp mine had vanished,— "Zee, I can find no words to say how deeply I am touched, and how highly I am honoured, by a love so disinterested and self-immolating. My best return to it is perfect frankness. Each nation has its customs. The customs of yours do not allow you to wed me; the customs of mine are equally opposed to such a union between those of races so widely differing. On the other hand, though not deficient in courage among my own people, or amid dangers with which I am familiar, I cannot, without a shudder of horror, think of constructing a bridal home in the heart of some dismal chaos, with all the elements of nature, fire and water and mephitic gases, at war with each other, and with the probability that at some moment, while you were busied in cleaving rocks or conveying vril into lamps, I should be devoured by a krek which your operations disturbed from its hiding-place. I, a mere Tish, do not deserve the love of a Gy so brilliant, so learned, so potent as yourself. Yes, I do not deserve that love, for I cannot return it."

Zee released my hand, rose to her feet, and turned her face away to hide her emotions; then she glided noiselessly along the room, and paused at the threshold. Suddenly, impelled as by a new thought, she returned to my side and said, in a whispered tone,—

"You told me you would speak with perfect frankness. With perfect frankness, then, answer me this question. If you cannot love me, do you love another?"

"Certainly I do not."

"You do not love Taë's sister?"

"I never saw her before last night."

"That is no answer. Love is swifter than vril. You hesitate to tell me. Do not think it is only jealousy that prompts me to caution you. If the Tur's daughter should declare love to you, if in her ignorance she confides to her father any preference that may justify his belief that she will woo you,

he will have no option but to request your immediate destruction, as he is specially charged with the duty of consulting the good of the community, which could not allow a daughter of the Vrilya to wed a son of the Tish-a, in that sense of marriage which does not confine itself to union of the souls. Alas! there would then be for you no escape. She has no strength of wing to uphold you through the air; she has no science wherewith to make a home in the wilderness. Believe that here my friendship speaks, and that my jealousy is silent."

With those words Zee left me. And recalling those words, I thought no more of succeeding to the throne of the Vrilya, or of the political, social, and moral reforms I should institute in the capacity of Absolute Sovereign.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER the conversation with Zee just recorded, I fell into a profound melancholy. The curious interest with which I had hitherto examined the life and habits of this marvellous community was at an end. I could not banish from my mind the consciousness that I was among a people who, however kind and courteous, could destroy me at any moment without scruple or compunction. The virtuous and peaceful life of the people which, while new to me, had seemed so holy a contrast to the contentions, the passions, the vices of the upper world, now began to oppress me with a sense of dulness and monotony. Even the serene tranquillity of the lustrous air preyed on my spirits. I longed for a change, even to winter, or storm, or darkness. I began to feel that, whatever our dreams of perfectibility, our restless aspirations towards a better and higher and calmer sphere of being, we, the mortals of the upper world, are not trained or fitted to enjoy for long the very happiness of which we dream or to which we aspire.

Now, in this social state of the Vrilya, it was singular to mark how it contrived to unite and to harmonize into one system nearly all the objects which the various philosophers of the upper world have placed before human hopes as the ideals of a Utopian future. It was a state in which war, with all its calamities, was deemed impossible,—a state in which the freedom of all and each was secured to the uttermost degree, without one of those animosities which make freedom in the upper world depend on the perpetual strife of hostile parties. Here the corruption which debases democracies was as unknown as the discontents which undermine the thrones of monarchies. Equality here was not a name; it was a reality. Riches were not persecuted, because they were not envied. Here those problems connected with the labours of a working class, hitherto insoluble above ground, and above ground conducing to such bitterness between classes, were solved by a process the simplest,—a distinct and separate working class was dispensed with altogether. Mechanical inventions, constructed on principles that baffled my research to ascertain, worked by an agency infinitely more powerful and infinitely more easy of management than aught we have yet extracted from electricity or steam, with the aid of children whose strength was never overtasked, but who loved their employment as sport and pastime, sufficed to create a Public-wealth so devoted to the general use that not a grumbler was ever heard of. The vices that rot our cities here had no footing. Amusements abounded, but they were all innocent. No merry-makings conduced to intoxication, to riot, to disease. Love existed, and was ardent in pursuit, but its object, once secured, was faithful. The adulterer, the profligate, the harlot, were phenomena so unknown in this commonwealth, that even to find the words by which they were designated one would have had to search throughout an obsolete literature composed thousands of years before. They who have been students of theoretical philosophies above ground, know that all these strange departures from civilized life do but realize ideas which have been broached, canvassed, ridiculed, contested for; sometimes partially tried, and still put forth in

fantastic books, but have never come to practical result. Nor were these all the steps towards theoretical perfectibility which this community had made. It had been the sober belief of Descartes that the life of man could be prolonged, not, indeed, on this earth, to eternal duration, but to what he called the age of the patriarchs, and modestly defined to be from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years average length. Well, even this dream of sages was here fulfilled,— nay, more than fulfilled; for the vigour of middle life was preserved even after the term of a century was passed. With this longevity was combined a greater blessing than itself, that of continuous health. Such diseases as befell the race were removed with ease by scientific applications of that agency — life-giving as life-destroying — which is inherent in vril. Even this idea is not unknown above ground, though it has generally been confined to enthusiasts or charlatans, and emanates from confused notions about mesmerism, odic force, etc. Passing by such trivial contrivances as wings, which every schoolboy knows has been tried and found wanting, from the mythical or prehistorical period, I proceed to that very delicate question, urged of late as essential to the perfect happiness of our human species by the two most disturbing and potential influences on upper-ground society, Womankind and Philosophy,— I mean, the Rights of Women.

Now, it is allowed by jurisprudists that it is idle to talk of rights where there are not corresponding powers to enforce them; and above ground, for some reason or other, man, in his physical force, in the use of weapons offensive and defensive, when it comes to positive personal contest, can, as a rule of general application, master women. But among this people there can be no doubt about the rights of women, because, as I have before said, the Gy, physically speaking, is bigger and stronger than the An; and her will being also more resolute than his, and will being essential to the direction of the vril force, she can bring to bear upon him, more potently than he on herself, the mystical agency which art can extract from the occult properties of nature. Therefore all that our female philosophers above ground contend

for as to rights of women, is conceded as a matter of course in this happy commonwealth. Besides such physical powers, the Gy-ei have (at least in youth) a keen desire for accomplishments and learning which exceeds that of the male; and thus they are the scholars, the professors,—the learned portion, in short, of the community.

Of course, in this state of society the female establishes, as I have shown, her most valued privilege, — that of choosing and courting her wedding partner. Without that privilege she would despise all the others. Now, above ground, we should not unreasonably apprehend that a female, thus potent and thus privileged, when she had fairly hunted us down and married us, would be very imperious and tyrannical. Not so with the Gy-ei: once married, the wings once suspended, and more amiable, complacent, docile mates, more sympathetic, more sinking their loftier capacities into the study of their husband's comparatively frivolous tastes and whims, no poet could conceive in his visions of conjugal bliss. Lastly, among the more important characteristics of the Vrilya, as distinguished from our mankind,—lastly, and most important on the bearings of their life and the peace of their commonwealths, is their universal agreement in the existence of a merciful beneficent Deity, and of a future world to the duration of which a century or two are moments too brief to waste upon thoughts of fame and power and avarice; while with that agreement is combined another,—namely, since they can know nothing as to the nature of that Deity beyond the fact of His supreme goodness, nor of that future world beyond the fact of its felicitous existence, so their reason forbids all angry disputes on insoluble questions. Thus they secure for that State in the bowels of the earth what no community ever secured under the light of the stars,—all the blessings and consolations of a religion without any of the evils and calamities which are engendered by strife between one religion and another.

It would be, then, utterly impossible to deny that the state of existence among the Vrilya is thus, as a whole, immeasurably more felicitous than that of super-terrestrial races, and,

realizing the dreams of our most sanguine philanthropists, almost approaches to a poet's conception of some angelical order; and yet, if you would take a thousand of the best and most philosophical of human beings you could find in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, or even Boston, and place them as citizens in this beatified community, my belief is, that in less than a year they would either die of *ennui*, or attempt some revolution by which they would militate against the good of the community, and be burned into cinders at the request of the Tur.

Certainly I have no desire to insinuate, through the medium of this narrative, any ignorant disparagement of the race to which I belong. I have, on the contrary, endeavoured to make it clear that the principles which regulate the social system of the Vrilya forbid them to produce those individual examples of human greatness which adorn the annals of the upper world. Where there are no wars there can be no Hannibal, no Washington, no Jackson, no Sheridan; where States are so happy that they fear no danger and desire no change, they cannot give birth to a Demosthenes, a Webster, a Sumner, a Wendell Holmes, or a Butler; and where a society attains to a moral standard, in which there are no crimes and no sorrows from which tragedy can extract its aliment of pity and sorrow, no salient vices or follies on which comedy can lavish its mirthful satire, it has lost the chance of producing a Shakspeare, or a Molière, or a Mrs. Beecher Stowe. But if I have no desire to disparage my fellow-men above ground in showing how much the motives that impel the energies and ambition of individuals in a society of contest and struggle, become dormant or annulled in a society which aims at securing for the aggregate the calm and innocent felicity which we presume to be the lot of beatified immortals, neither, on the other hand, have I the wish to represent the commonwealths of the Vrilya as an ideal form of political society, to the attainment of which our own efforts of reform should be directed. On the contrary, it is because we have so combined, throughout the series of ages, the elements which compose human character, that it would be utterly impossible for us

to adopt the modes of life, or to reconcile our passions to the modes of thought, among the Vrilya,—that I arrived at the conviction that this people — though originally not only of our human race, but, as seems to me clear by the roots of their language, descended from the same ancestors as the great Aryan family, from which in varied streams has flowed the dominant civilization of the world; and having, according to their myths and their history, passed through phases of society familiar to ourselves — had yet now developed into a distinct species, with which it was impossible that any community in the upper world could amalgamate; and that if they ever emerged from these nether recesses into the light of day, they would, according to their own traditional persuasions of their ultimate destiny, destroy and replace our existent varieties of man.

It may indeed be said, since more than one Gy could be found to conceive a partiality for so ordinary a type of our super-terrestrial race as myself, that even if the Vrilya did appear above ground, we might be saved from extermination by intermixture of race. But this is too sanguine a belief. Instances of such *mésalliance* would be as rare as those of intermarriage between the Anglo-Saxon emigrants and the Red Indians. Nor would time be allowed for the operation of familiar intercourse. The Vrilya, on emerging, induced by the charm of a sunlit heaven to form their settlements above ground, would commence at once the work of destruction, seize upon the territories already cultivated, and clear off, without scruple, all the inhabitants who resisted that invasion. And considering their contempt for the institutions of Koom-Posh, or Popular Government, and the pugnacious valour of my beloved countrymen, I believe that if the Vrilya first appeared in free America — as, being the choicest portion of the habitable earth, they would doubtless be induced to do — and said, "This quarter of the globe we take; Citizens of a Koom-Posh, make way for the development of species in the Vrilya," my brave compatriots would show fight, and not a soul of them would be left in this life to rally round the Stars and Stripes at the end of a week.

I now saw but little of Zee, save at meals, when the family assembled, and she was then reserved and silent. My apprehensions of danger from an affection I had so little encouraged or deserved, therefore, now faded away, but my dejection continued to increase. I pined for escape to the upper world, but I racked my brains in vain for any means to effect it. I was never permitted to wander forth alone, so that I could not even visit the spot on which I had alighted, and see if it were possible to reascend to the mine. Nor even in the Silent Hours, when the household was locked in sleep, could I have let myself down from the lofty floor in which my apartment was placed. I knew not how to command the automata who stood mockingly at my beck beside the wall, nor could I ascertain the springs by which were set in movement the platforms that supplied the place of stairs. The knowledge how to avail myself of these contrivances had been purposely withheld from me. Oh, that I could but have learned the use of wings, so freely here at the service of every infant! then I might have escaped from the casement, regained the rocks, and buoyed myself aloft through the chasm of which the perpendicular sides forbade place for human footing!

CHAPTER XXVII.

ONE day, as I sat alone and brooding in my chamber, Taë flew in at the open window and alighted on the couch beside me. I was always pleased with the visits of a child in whose society, if humbled, I was less eclipsed than in that of Ana who had completed their education and matured their understanding; and as I was permitted to wander forth with him for my companion, and as I longed to revisit the spot in which I had descended into the nether world, I hastened to ask him if he were at leisure for a stroll beyond the streets of the city. His countenance seemed to me graver than usual as he replied, "I came hither on purpose to invite you forth."

We soon found ourselves in the street, and I had not got far from the house when we encountered five or six young Gy-ei, who were returning from the fields with baskets full of flowers, and chanting a song in chorus as they walked. A young Gy sings more often than she talks. They stopped on seeing us, accosting Taë with familiar kindness, and me with the courteous gallantry which distinguishes the Gy-ei in their manner towards our weaker sex.

And here I may observe that, though a virgin Gy is so frank in her courtship to the individual she favours, there is nothing that approaches to that general breadth and loudness of manner which those young ladies of the Anglo-Saxon race, to whom the distinguished epithet of "fast" is accorded, exhibit towards young gentlemen whom they do not profess to love. No: the bearing of the Gy-ei towards males in ordinary is very much that of high-bred men in the gallant societies of the upper world towards ladies whom they respect but do not woo; deferential, complimentary, exquisitely polished,— what we should call "chivalrous."

Certainly I was a little put out by the number of civil things addressed to my *amour propre*, which were said to me by these courteous young Gy-ei. In the world I came from, a man would have thought himself aggrieved, treated with irony, "chaffed" (if so vulgar a slang word may be allowed on the authority of the popular novelists who use it so freely), when one fair Gy complimented me on the freshness of my complexion, another on the choice of colours in my dress, a third, with a sly smile, on the conquests I had made at Aph-Lin's entertainment. But I knew already that all such language was what the French call *banal*, and did but express in the female mouth, below earth, that sort of desire to pass for amiable with the opposite sex which, above earth, arbitrary custom and hereditary transmission demonstrate by the mouth of the male. And just as a high-bred young lady, above earth, habituated to such compliments, feels that she cannot, without impropriety, return them, nor evince any great satisfaction at receiving them, so I, who had learned polite manners at the house of so wealthy and dignified a Minister of

that nation, could but smile and try to look pretty in bashfully disclaiming the compliments showered upon me. While we were thus talking, Taë's sister, it seems, had seen us from the upper rooms of the Royal Palace at the entrance of the town, and, precipitating herself on her wings, alighted in the midst of the group.

Singling me out, she said, though still with the inimitable deference of manner which I have called "chivalrous," yet not without a certain abruptness of tone which, as addressed to the weaker sex, Sir Philip Sidney might have termed "rustic," "Why do you never come to see us?"

While I was deliberating on the right answer to give to this unlooked-for question, Taë said quickly and sternly, "Sister, you forget,—the stranger is of my sex. It is not for persons of my sex, having due regard for reputation and modesty, to lower themselves by running after the society of yours."

This speech was received with evident approval by the young Gy-ei in general; but Taë's sister looked greatly abashed. Poor thing!—and a PRINCESS too!

Just at this moment a shadow fell on the space between me and the group; and, turning round, I beheld the chief magistrate coming close upon us, with the silent and stately pace peculiar to the Vrilya. At the sight of his countenance, the same terror which had seized me when I first beheld it returned. On that brow, in those eyes, there was that same indefinable something which marked the being of a race fatal to our own,—that strange expression of serene exemption from our common cares and passions, of conscious superior power, compassionate and inflexible as that of a judge who pronounces doom. I shivered, and, inclining low, pressed the arm of my child-friend, and drew him onward silently. The Tur placed himself before our path, regarded me for a moment without speaking, then turned his eye quietly on his daughter's face, and, with a grave salutation to her and the other Gy-ei, went through the midst of the group,—still without a word.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN Taë and I found ourselves alone on the broad road that lay between the city and the chasm through which I had descended into this region beneath the light of the stars and sun, I said under my breath, "Child and friend, there is a look in your father's face which appalls me. I feel as if, in its awful tranquillity, I gazed upon death."

Taë did not immediately reply. He seemed agitated, and as if debating with himself by what words to soften some unwelcome intelligence. At last he said, "None of the Vrilya fear death: do you?"

"The dread of death is implanted in the breasts of the race to which I belong. We can conquer it at the call of duty, of honour, of love. We can die for a truth, for a native land, for those who are dearer to us than ourselves. But if death do really threaten me now and here, where are such counteractions to the natural instinct which invests with awe and terror the contemplation of severance between soul and body?"

Taë looked surprised, but there was great tenderness in his voice as he replied, "I will tell my father what you say. I will entreat him to spare your life."

"He has, then, already decreed to destroy it?"

"'Tis my sister's fault or folly," said Taë, with some petulance. "But she spoke this morning to my father; and, after she had spoken, he summoned me, as a chief among the children who are commissioned to destroy such lives as threaten the community, and he said to me, 'Take thy vril staff, and seek the stranger who has made himself dear to thee. Be his end painless and prompt.'"

"And," I faltered, recoiling from the child, "and it is, then, for my murder that thus treacherously thou hast invited me forth? No, I cannot believe it. I cannot think thee guilty of such a crime."

"It is no crime to slay those who threaten the good of the community; it would be a crime to slay the smallest insect that cannot harm us."

"If you mean that I threaten the good of the community because your sister honours me with the sort of preference which a child may feel for a strange plaything, it is not necessary to kill me. Let me return to the people I have left, and by the chasm through which I descended. With a slight help from you, I might do so now. You, by the aid of your wings, could fasten to the rocky ledge within the chasm the cord that you found, and have no doubt preserved. Do but that; assist me but to the spot from which I alighted, and I vanish from your world forever, and as surely as if I were among the dead."

"The chasm through which you descended! Look round; we stand now on the very place where it yawned. What see you? Only solid rock. The chasm was closed, by the orders of Aph-Lin, as soon as communication between him and yourself was established in your trance, and he learned from your own lips the nature of the world from which you came. Do you not remember when Zee bade me not question you as to yourself or your race? On quitting you that day, Aph-Lin accosted me, and said, 'No path between the stranger's home and ours should be left unclosed, or the sorrow and evil of his home may descend to ours. Take with thee the children of thy band, smite the sides of the cavern with your vril staves till the fall of their fragments fills up every chink through which a gleam of our lamps could force its way.'"

As the child spoke, I stared aghast at the blind rocks before me. Huge and irregular, the granite masses, showing by charred discolouration where they had been shattered, rose from footing to roof-top; not a cranny!

"All hope, then, is gone," I murmured, sinking down on the craggy wayside, "and I shall nevermore see the sun." I covered my face with my hands, and prayed to Him whose presence I had so often forgotten when the heavens had declared His handiwork. I felt His presence in the depths of the nether earth, and amid the world of the grave. I looked

up, taking comfort and courage from my prayers, and gazing with a quiet smile into the face of the child, said, "Now, if thou must slay me, strike."

Taë shook his head gently. "Nay," he said, "my father's request is not so formally made as to leave me no choice. I will speak with him, and I may prevail to save thee. Strange that thou shouldst have that fear of death which we thought was only the instinct of the inferior creatures, to whom the conviction of another life has not been vouchsafed. With us, not an infant knows such a fear. Tell me, my dear Tish," he continued, after a little pause, "would it reconcile thee more to departure from this form of life to that form which lies on the other side of the moment called 'death,' did I share thy journey? If so, I will ask my father whether it be allowable for me to go with thee. I am one of our generation destined to emigrate, when of age for it, to some regions unknown within this world. I would just as soon emigrate now to regions unknown in another world. The All-Good is no less there than here. Where is He not?"

"Child," said I, seeing by Taë's countenance that he spoke in serious earnest, "it is crime in thee to slay me; it were a crime not less in me to say, 'Slay thyself.' The All-Good chooses His own time to give us life, and His own time to take it away. Let us go back. If, on speaking with thy father, he decides on my death, give me the longest warning in thy power, so that I may pass the interval in self-preparation."

We walked back to the city, conversing but by fits and starts. We could not understand each other's reasonings, and I felt for the fair child, with his soft voice and beautiful face, much as a convict feels for the executioner who walks beside him to the place of doom.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN the midst of those hours set apart for sleep, and constituting the night of the Vrilya, I was awakened from the disturbed slumber into which I had not long fallen, by a hand on my shoulder. I started, and beheld Zee standing beside me.

"Hush," she said, in a whisper; "let no one hear us. Dost thou think that I have ceased to watch over thy safety because I could not win thy love? I have seen Taë. He has not prevailed with his father, who had meanwhile conferred with the three sages whom, in doubtful matters, he takes into council, and by their advice he has ordained thee to perish when the world re-awakens to life. I will save thee. Rise and dress."

Zee pointed to a table by the couch, on which I saw the clothes I had worn on quitting the upper world, and which I had exchanged subsequently for the more picturesque garments of the Vrilya. The young Gy then moved towards the casement, and stepped into the balcony while hastily and wonderingly I donned my own habiliments. When I joined her on the balcony, her face was pale and rigid. Taking me by the hand, she said softly, "See how brightly the art of the Vrilya has lighted up the world in which they dwell. To-morrow that world will be dark to me." She drew me back into the room without waiting for my answer, thence into the corridor, from which we descended into the hall. We passed into the deserted streets and along the broad upward road which wound beneath the rocks. Here, where there is neither day nor night, the Silent Hours are unutterably solemn,—the vast space illumined by mortal skill is so wholly without the sight and stir of mortal life. Soft as were our footsteps, their sounds vexed the ear, as out of harmony with the universal repose. I was aware in my own mind,

though Zee said it not, that she had decided to assist my return to the upper world, and that we were bound towards the place from which I had descended. Her silence infected me, and commanded mine. And now we approached the chasm. It had been reopened; not presenting, indeed, the same aspect as when I had emerged from it, but through that closed wall of rock before which I had last stood with Tai, a new cleft had been riven, and along its blackened sides still glimmered sparks and smouldered embers. My upward gaze could not, however, penetrate more than a few feet into the darkness of the hollow void, and I stood dismayed, and wondering how that grim ascent was to be made.

Zee divined my doubt. "Fear not," said she, with a faint smile; "your return is assured. I began this work when the Silent Hours commenced, and all else were asleep; believe that I did not pause till the path back into thy world was clear. I shall be with thee a little while yet. We do not part until thou sayest, 'Go, for I need thee no more.'"

My heart smote me with remorse at these words. "Ah," I exclaimed, "would that thou wert of my race or I of thine, then I should never say, 'I need thee no more.'"

"I bless thee for those words, and I shall remember them when thou art gone," answered the Gy, tenderly.

During this brief interchange of words, Zee had turned away from me, her form bent and her head bowed over her breast. Now, she rose to the full height of her grand stature, and stood fronting me. While she had been thus averted from my gaze, she had lighted up the circlet that she wore round her brow, so that it blazed as if it were a crown of stars. Not only her face and her form, but the atmosphere around, were illumined by the effulgence of the diadem.

"Now," said she, "put thine arms around me for the first and last time. Nay, thus; courage, and cling firm."

As she spoke her form dilated, the vast wings expanded. Clinging to her, I was borne aloft through the terrible chasm. The starry light from her forehead shot around and before us through the darkness. Brightly and steadfastly and swiftly as an angel may soar heavenward with the soul it rescues

from the grave, went the flight of the Gy, till I heard in the distance the hum of human voices, the sounds of human toil. We halted on the flooring of one of the galleries of the mine, and beyond, in the vista, burned the dim, rare, feeble lamps of the miners. Then I released my hold. The Gy kissed me on my forehead passionately, but as with a mother's passion, and said, as the tears gushed from her eyes, "Farewell forever! Thou wilt not let me go into thy world,—thou canst never return to mine. Ere our household shake off slumber, the rocks will have again closed over the chasm, not to be reopened by me, nor perhaps by others, for ages yet unguessed. Think of me sometimes, and with kindness. When I reach the life that lies beyond this speck in time, I shall look round for thee. Even there, the world consigned to thyself and thy people may have rocks and gulfs which divide it from that in which I rejoin those of my race that have gone before, and I may be powerless to cleave way to regain thee as I have cloven way to lose."

Her voice ceased. I heard the swan-like sough of her wings, and saw the rays of her starry diadem receding far and farther through the gloom.

I sat myself down for some time, musing sorrowfully; then I rose and took my way with slow footsteps towards the place in which I heard the sounds of men. The miners I encountered were strange to me, of another nation than my own. They turned to look at me with some surprise, but finding that I could not answer their brief questions in their own language, they returned to their work and suffered me to pass on unmolested. In fine, I regained the mouth of the mine, little troubled by other interrogatories,—save those of a friendly official to whom I was known, and luckily he was too busy to talk much with me. I took care not to return to my former lodging, but hastened that very day to quit a neighbourhood where I could not long have escaped inquiries to which I could have given no satisfactory answers. I regained in safety my own country, in which I have been long peacefully settled, and engaged in practical business, till I retired, on a competent fortune, three years ago. I have been

little invited and little tempted to talk of the roving and adventures of my youth. Somewhat disappointed, as most men are, in matters connected with household love and domestic life, I often think of the young Gy as I sit alone at night, and wonder how I could have rejected such a love, no matter what dangers attended it, or by what conditions it was restricted. Only, the more I think of a people calmly developing, in regions excluded from our sight and deemed uninhabitable by our sages, powers surpassing our most disciplined modes of force, and virtues to which our life, social and political, becomes antagonistic in proportion as our civilization advances, the more devoutly I pray that ages may yet elapse before there emerge into sunlight our inevitable destroyers. Being, however, frankly told by my physician that I am afflicted by a complaint which, though it gives little pain and no perceptible notice of its encroachments, may at any moment be fatal, I have thought it my duty to my fellow-men to place on record these forewarnings of The Coming Race.

THE END.